THE LIFE OF LORD CHATHAM

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ERRATUM.

Page 109, line 22, *for* "of heresy"
read "for heresy."

CHATHAM

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

Pitt's birth and parentage—At Eton and Oxford—Holds a commission in the Blues—Enters Parliament—The position of parties—Pitt joins the Opposition Whigs—His early speeches—Deprived of his commission by Walpole—Pitt's intimacy with the Prince of Wales.

"MR. PITT," says Lord Shelburne in his Autobiography, "was a younger brother of no great family, as I believe the founder of it was Governor Pitt, his grandfather, commonly known by the name of Diamond Pitt, on account of a vast large diamond which he obtained I know not how in the East Indies."[1] The quotation is in the characteristic manner of the very human document from which it is taken, but justice to our subject demands its amplification here. It

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 71.

was Governor Pitt, indeed, who conferred wealth, and with it a measure of celebrity, upon the family. But they traced their origin farther back into the past. The first authentic date for the foundation of their fortunes seems to be in the reign of Elizabeth, when a certain John Pitt, their progenitor, was Clerk of the Exchequer. His son settled at Blandford in 1662, and his grandson was rector of Blandford. The rector's son Thomas was the "Diamond" Pitt above referred to, who brought the family into prominence and gave them influence and means. His virile and masterful personality found scope in a varied career of commerce and administration in the Indies. Beginning as an "interloping" merchant, he became finally Governor of Madras; and in India he purchased the famous Pitt diamond, which he sold to the Regent Orleans in 1717, making probably over £100,000 by the transaction. At home he utilised his accumulated riches according to the spirit of the times. He bought among other property the borough of Old Sarum, and himself sat in Parliament as its representative. Robert, his eldest son, married Harriet, sister of the Irish Earl of Grandison, and their second son was William Pitt, the future Lord Chatham.

Pitt was born on November 15, 1708, in the parish of St. James's, Westminster. Little is known of his parents, and singularly few details

survive of his own boyhood and youth. Like Walpole before him and Charles James Fox after him, he went to Eton. George Lyttelton, with whom he formed a close friendship, Henry Fox, his political rival during the greater part of his career, and Fielding were among his schoolfellows. In after-years Pitt confided to Shelburne a retrospective view of Eton, which the latter embodied in one of those mordant sentences that make his portrait of Pitt, however palpably distorted, the most readable of all the engrossing passages in his fragment of autobiography. "Mr. William Pitt," Shelburne said, "was by all accounts a very singular character from the time he went to Eton, where he was distinguished, and must have had a very early turn of observation, by his telling me, that his reason for preferring private to publick education was, that he scarce observed a boy who was not cowed for life at Eton; that a publick school might suit a boy of a turbulent disposition, but would not do where there was any gentleness."[1] Whatever may have been the effect of eighteenth-century Eton upon others, it can scarcely be said to have cowed Pitt. But we may question whether his early training exercised much formative influence on a character that was soon strongly marked and exceptional. It may possibly have ac-

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 72.

centuated, by repulsion rather than attraction, certain traits which were always noticeable in Pitt, but which in normal cases a public school education is supposed to modify or eradicate. An intense self-consciousness, a lofty and exasperating reserve, and an elaboration of manner unusual even in the eighteenth century, were characteristics that accompanied him throughout his life.

From Eton Pitt went in 1727 to Trinity College, Oxford, where by a curious irony of circumstance Lord North, who was to be the chief agent in carrying out that coercive American policy which Pitt spent his last years in denouncing, followed him some twenty years later. About Pitt's life at college the records are unfortunately silent; and for the Oxford period, as for that spent at Eton, we can in the main only fall back upon conjecture. The chief surviving trace of his industry is the Latin poem which he wrote in his second year on the occasion of the death of George the First. Lord Macaulay makes merry over it in the first of his two celebrated essays on Chatham; but, though conceived according to the spirit of the age in strains of extravagant eulogy, and containing one false quantity, which we may hope, with Macaulay, was the error of his printer or biographer rather than of himself, it is on the

whole not perhaps quite so worthless as the great historian would have us believe. But Pitt never attained to a true appreciation of the beauty of classical poetry. When he discusses matters of scholarship and taste he is invariably pedantic; and though his letters to his nephew, Lord Camelford, contain repeated exhortations to study Homer and Virgil, he fixes his attention almost exclusively upon their moral aspect, regarding them as essentially teachers of virtue. History, ethics, and politics were subjects more really congenial to him. When he was himself arranging for the education of his son William, he expressed a special desire that Thucydides should be the first Greek book read by the latter on going up to Cambridge. And long after his own studies were finished, in the late evening of his life, his thoughts went back at a great crisis to the Athenian who has been finely called "the historian of our common humanity, the teacher of abstract political wisdom," and in one of his American speeches he paid the first Congress at Philadelphia the splendid compliment of setting it side by side with the statesmen of antiquity whom Thucydides imperishably depicts.[1] At Oxford Pitt also imbibed the philosophy of Locke, and with it the principles of Whiggism. But his university career was never carried to

[1] *Vide* p. 188.

completion. Gout, which had already made itself felt at Eton, again attacked him, and he left Oxford, without taking a degree, to make a tour for his health in France and Italy.

He was, it must be remembered, a younger son, and when he returned from the Continent his father was dead and his own means were but scanty. He decided to enter the army, and secured a cornet's commission in the Blues. It is not easy to conceive of Pitt as a soldier, but during his brief career of arms he took pains with his profession as he did with everything. He afterwards told Shelburne that while he was a cornet of horse there was no military book which he did not read through. The real path of his ambition was now, however, opening before him. His elder brother, who had inherited wealth and much Parliamentary interest, was elected simultaneously for Okehampton and Old Sarum. He took his seat for the former borough, and got Pitt returned as junior member for Old Sarum in 1735. Pitt's colleague in its representation was Robert Needham, who had married his sister Catherine.

When Pitt entered Parliament, Walpole was drawing towards the close of his long period of supremacy. Few epochs in English history are superficially less attractive than the Walpolean era. Looking back upon it, our eyes are fixed

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

After the portrait by Kneller

mainly on Parliament, where we see a vista of government by corruption. Though Walpole did not originate Parliamentary corruption, he systematised it; and to his unconcealed disbelief in principle, and his avowed preference for retaining power by bribery and patronage rather than by the concentration of all available administrative ability in the service of the Crown, the low political tone of his time was largely due. Its traces were seen in the want of public spirit which was so apparent throughout the country during the Forty-five. It was reflected in a latitudinarian and lethargic Church, and in a literature which, though polished, lacked inspiration. Yet, in spite of Walpole's obvious shortcomings, few who watch the course of English history during the period that succeeded his fall can feel much doubt as to the supreme usefulness of his career. He restored the financial equilibrium of England, and with light taxation and sound credit commerce and industries steadily grew. Above all, his maintenance of the Hanoverian dynasty saved the country from the turmoil attendant on a disputed succession, and ensured the tranquil development of the Parliamentary system. Pitt's era of conquest represents a reaction from the pacific policy of Walpole, but it may be said with justice that it would scarcely have been possible if Pitt had not been able to

build on the foundations which the great peace Minister had laid.

But Pitt, when he came into the House of Commons a young man of twenty-seven, could hardly be expected to appraise Walpole's administration with the judicial equability which is now possible for us after a lapse of nearly two centuries since the time in question. If he was full of ambition, he was inspired also by lofty principles uncommon in his age. Neither his ambition nor his principles were of the kind which Walpole was accustomed to conciliate. Nor was Pitt likely to make advances. The immense material progress of England under Walpole would have been obscured in his eyes by the aspect of Parliament immediately before him. He found a Ministry intrenched in borough influence and Crown patronage, and an Opposition which comprised a much greater abundance of talent than was to be found in the Government, and was made up of men who, amid wide differences of political conviction, were united in one common feeling of resentment at their exclusion from the activities and the fruits of office. Its most formidable group consisted of the discontented Whigs. They were led in the House of Commons by Pulteney, a man of property, a brilliant and attractive speaker, and a great master of debate. Few politicians of the

eighteenth century showed more early promise than he, and few had a career which was so lamentably ineffective. Faults of temper he certainly had, and he lacked the judgment and balance essential to a statesman; but, like many of his fellows, he suffered from the fact that his lot was cast in the time of Walpole, whose neglect drove him into opposition, where his policy henceforward was guided by little more than pique. In the Lords the leader of the Whig Opposition was Carteret, "a fine person of commanding beauty," said his critical son-in-law, "the best Greek scholar of his age, overflowing with wit, not so much a *diseur de bons mots*, like Lord Chesterfield, as a man of true, comprehensive, ready wit, which at once saw to the bottom, and whose imagination never failed him, and was joined to great natural elegance."[1] His close acquaintance with foreign politics, above all his knowledge of Germany and the German language, gave him a unique place among his contemporaries and an immense influence with the King. Another prominent figure among the Opposition Whigs was Chesterfield, remembered now chiefly for his letters and his traditional position at the head of *ton*; a courtier rather than a statesman, though as a diplomatist abroad and an administrator in Ireland he showed conspicuous ability.

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 38.

The other great section of the Opposition was made up of the Tories, "rows of ponderous fox-hunters, fat with Staffordshire or Devonshire ale." But two of them at least rose above mediocrity —Shippen, the able and incorruptible Jacobite leader, and Sir William Wyndham, titular head of the Tories for many years, whose eloquence and personal charm won for him a considerable position. How far the Tories were leavened with Jacobitism it is difficult to say. Shippen's group was confessedly Jacobite; but most of the remainder accepted the dynasty while they protested against its policy. The Ministry endeavoured to stultify them by proclaiming them all Jacobites without discrimination. But their most serious disability was, that long exclusion from office had robbed them of administrative experience and capacity; and though in integrity they compared favourably at this time with the Whigs, it might be said without unfairness that they were scarcely exposed to temptation, for there seemed but little prospect of either a Tory or a Coalition Ministry.

Pitt's place in this miscellaneous host was settled for him by his strong Whig proclivities, his antipathy to Walpole, and his intimacy with one of those small groups of politicians united by ties of friendship, family, or interest, which, under the name of "connections," were unspeakably dear

to the heart of the eighteenth century. The "Cobham cousinhood," or "Cobham's cubs" as they were irreverently called, included besides Lord Cobham, who had been deprived of his regiment by Walpole, Sir George Lyttelton, Richard Grenville, and, soon afterwards, George Grenville. Lyttelton owed his return for Okehampton to the Pitt interest, and was in early life Pitt's most intimate associate. His was a moderating influence upon his greater but impetuous friend—an influence contrasting strongly with that exercised by the factious and overbearing spirit of Richard Grenville. But the latter, who is known to history by his later title of Earl Temple, played a more considerable part than Lyttelton in the politics of his time, and, becoming afterwards Pitt's brother-in-law, took Lyttelton's place in his counsels, with results that were more than once attended with disaster. As of him, so of George Grenville, much more will be heard in the course of this short history. Of George Grenville it is sufficient now to say that, despite his probity, his great business powers, and the orthodoxy of his Whiggism, there never was, and never could have been, any real union between him and Pitt. Grenville was a precisian; and the rigidity of his point of view, always that of a Parliamentarian and a lawyer, made him an impossible colleague for a man who, like Pitt, was at once

intensely proud, elastic in his sympathies, and ever ready to sacrifice the letter to the spirit of the law.

Pitt made his first speech in support of an address to the Crown, moved by Pulteney, on the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Princess of Saxe-Gotha. It was "as empty and wordy," says Macaulay, "as a maiden speech on such an occasion might be expected to be."[1] Certainly there is nothing in the report of it which has come down to us that could excite enthusiasm. However, it received high contemporary praise, and the impression which Pitt made was deepened by his subsequent performances. He had not yet attained, by any means, the maturity of eloquence which astonishes us in his later speeches. But his personal attractions were great, and instantly drew the attention of Parliament upon him. His graceful and commanding figure and his piercing eye, together with that strange fascination of gesture and delivery in which no English orator seems ever to have approached him, can never have been seen to more advantage than in these early years of opposition. Above all, he possessed as yet unimpaired a voice of wonderful melody and resonance, which in his later life, when the substance of what he said showed far more real beauty and power, sank too often through exhaustion into an inaudible whisper.

[1] Macaulay's *Essays*: "William Pitt, Earl of Chatham."

He soon attracted the notice of Walpole, who lost no time in manifesting his disapproval. It was time to "muzzle this terrible cornet," and Pitt was accordingly dismissed from the army. The only result was that he plunged with fresh hostility into the fiercest of opposition, the chief rallying point for which was now furnished by the Prince of Wales. Prince Frederick had quarrelled with the King because he had not been allowed to wed a Prussian princess, and after his marriage with the Princess of Saxe-Gotha he cherished a still more bitter grievance on account of the inadequacy and insecurity of the allowance which he received from his father. He was himself a man of straw, but under the able tuition of Bolingbroke, who, though excluded from Parliament, inspired the Opposition as a plotter and a pamphleteer, he made himself its instrument, and his personal feud against the King and Queen lent its attack upon the Government a peculiarly factious tone. The Cobham party gathered round him, and Pitt duly supported Pulteney's motion for an address praying the King to settle £100,000 a year on the Prince of Wales. Then, when in the summer of 1737 the rupture within the Royal Family was complete, and the Prince, driven from Court, set up a separate establishment at Norfolk House, Pitt obtained compensation for his dismissal by

Walpole in a post in Frederick's household. The Prince selected the little Cobham group as the special object of his favours, and Pitt was appointed his Groom of the Bedchamber, Lyttelton his private secretary. In this rival Court circle Pitt lived on terms of great intimacy. Charles Butler tells how the Prince and Pitt were walking one day in Lord Cobham's gardens at Stowe, apart from the other guests and deep in conversation. Cobham thought that Pitt was trying to lead the Prince into some incautious project, and he said as much to one of the company. The latter observed that at all events their *tête-à-tête* could not last long. "Sir," said Lord Cobham eagerly, "you don't know Mr. Pitt's talent of insinuation; in a very short quarter of an hour he can persuade any man of anything." Pitt at this time was constantly to be found at Stowe; and the poet Thomson, when he wrote of its "fair majestic paradise," left a pleasant reminiscence of him in the very characteristic lines—

> "And there, O Pitt, thy country's early boast,
> There let me sit beneath the sheltered slopes;
> Or in that temple, where in future times,
> Thou well shalt merit a distinguished name,
> And with thy converse blest, catch the last smile
> Of Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods."[1]

[1] Thomson's "Autumn."

A still surer testimony to his increasing importance was that the organs of the Government began to assail him. "A young man of my acquaintance," said the *Gazetteer* in the quaint language of the time, "though an overbearing disposition and a weak judgment, assuming the character of a great man, which he is no way able to support, is become the object of ridicule, instead of praise. My young man has the vanity to put himself in the place of Tully. But let him consider that everyone who has the same natural imperfections with Tully, has not therefore the same natural perfections; though his neck should be as long, his body as slender, yet his voice may not be as sonorous, his action may not be as just." [1]

[1] Almon's *Anecdotes of Chatham*, i. 33.

CHAPTER II

RISE IN PARLIAMENT

Jenkins's Ear and the Spanish War—War of the Austrian Succession—Fall of Walpole—Ascendency of Carteret—Pitt's vehement attacks on him—Carteret resigns—Pitt supports the Pelhams—His change of policy discussed—Pitt and Carteret contrasted—Carteret's momentary return to power—Pitt given office by the Pelhams—His attitude as Paymaster of the Forces.

IN the present chapter it is proposed to trace the outline of Pitt's political career up to the moment when, in 1746, he first attained office. Both in the history of Europe and in his own this was a period of transition. In British annals it was ushered in by the "colony quarrel" of the Spanish War, which merged itself eventually in the Continental War of Succession, and led directly up to the beginning of the world-wide struggle between England and France for colonial supremacy over which Pitt presided. In the sphere of Continental politics it witnessed the rise of Prussia to the rank of a first-class

power, and the commencement of the long Austro-Prussian rivalry within Germany which, though desperately fought out again in the Seven Years' War, can only be said to have closed in the nineteenth century on the field of Königgrätz. And, finally, in the life of Pitt it covered alike his growing prominence as a leader of Opposition and his undisguised change of front upon adhesion to the Government.

The Spanish War was in the nature of things inevitable, but it was an accident, and almost, it may be said, a phrase, which set it aflame. When Captain Jenkins, in a sentence too epigrammatic to have been original, declared at the bar of the House of Commons that he had commended his soul to God and his cause to his country on being taken and tortured by a Spanish *guarda-costa*, an electric thrill of sympathy and indignation ran through the country, which made it certain that Walpole would not be able to resist the call for war. Whatever may have been the merits of the case of Jenkins, his story represented not unfaithfully the precarious state of things in the New World. Spain still claimed a monopoly of trade with South America, and England in theory still recognised the claim. By the Treaty of Utrecht British rights were limited to the concession then granted by Spain, of trading with a single vessel

and trafficking in negroes; but in practice England carried on a vast illicit trade which had long outrun these dimensions. Spain retaliated by stringently exercising the right of search on the high seas; and the Spanish officials, who seized British ships and maltreated British sailors, undoubtedly behaved with cruelty and insolence in their repression of encroachments on a monopoly which was really indefensible. Beneath the question of treaty stipulations lay other problems of incalculable importance, to which Carlyle has given trenchant expression in his *Frederick the Great*. "Shall there be a Yankee nation, shall there not be; shall the New World be of Spanish type, shall it be of English? Issues which we may call immense. Among the then extant sons of Adam, where was he who could in the faintest degree surmise what issues lay hidden in the Jenkins Ear Question?"[1]

A further significance was given to the struggle by the existence of the Family Compact between the Crowns of France and Spain. This had been signed in 1733, and it linked the two Bourbon Powers together in a league to check England's commercial development. Viewed in the light of this menacing alliance, the Spanish War is seen to be only an initial stage in the fight for the expansion of England's colonial empire,

[1] *Frederick the Great*, bk. xii. ch. 12; 3.

which rapidly resolved itself into a duel with France lasting for the rest of the century. So regarded, it seems almost superfluous to debate its morality. England's legal title was unquestionably faulty, but she had the weight of facts and the insistent pressure of destiny upon her side. The enterprise on which she embarked was characteristic of the time which Sir John Seeley has well described as the iron age of international relations. Material motives inspired it. But it was not undertaken at the bidding of a diplomatist or a dynastic combination: a genuine national impulse prompted the first of those struggles in which England seemed to herself to be fighting not less truly for existence than for expansion.

Walpole withstood the people's desire for war as long as he dared, and at one time it seemed possible that he might patch up the dispute by a convention. But the gathering clamour in the country and the increased hostility of the attitude of France and Spain soon made further resistance on his part impossible, and he declared war in November 1739. On the details of the sadly mismanaged campaign which followed there is not space to dwell here. It began auspiciously with Admiral Vernon's capture of Portobello. But the great expedition against Carthagena proved utterly disastrous; and the only incidents

of the war on which it is possible to look back with satisfaction are the exploits of Anson, whose long adventurous voyage, ending with the capture of the Acapulco galleon, forms one of the bright pages of British seamanship.

Pitt was one of the most active of the war party in the House of Commons. Such reports as we possess, however, of his attacks upon the Government have not much authentic value. To this period belongs that most celebrated repartee, which was put into his mouth by the greatest man who ever figured as a Parliamentary reporter. Dr. Johnson was now writing accounts of the debates for the *Gentleman's Magazine* from meagre notes, and his own sense of the fitness of things and his determination "that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it" decided the results. Horace Walpole the elder had taxed Pitt in debate with the temerity of youth. To this Johnson made Pitt reply in the well-known words: "The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honourable gentleman has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience."

The last fierce struggle within Parliament was

now approaching which ended in the fall of Walpole, and is so vividly pictured in his son's letters to Sir Horace Mann. The failure of the operations on the Spanish Main had by themselves gone far to undo the Minister. But what made his overthrow more certain was that he was involved in a European war as well.

Dark clouds were gathering over the Continent, and with the death of the Emperor Charles VI. in October 1740 came the bursting of the storm. Charles had for twenty years devoted himself to securing his daughter's peaceable succession to his dominions, and had secured from the Great Powers a recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction, which guaranteed it. But when he died, leaving Maria Theresa apparently defenceless, the opportunity for territorial peculation was too tempting to be lost.

Frederick II. poured a Prussian army into Silesia, and overwhelmed the Austrians under Neipperg at Mollwitz. France threw herself into the attack, hoping to secure the Austrian Netherlands as her prize. The Italian duchies of Maria Theresa attracted Spain. Finally, the Elector of Bavaria appeared as a rival candidate for the Austrian dominions and the Imperial Crown; and before the end of 1741 Silesia was firmly held by Prussia, Bohemia was in the possession of the French and Bavarians, and the

Elector had been crowned its king. The obvious and indeed the only ally to whom the Queen of Hungary could look was England, and both George and the country were eager for war. Parliament voted a subsidy to Maria Theresa, and George II. went over to the Continent to raise an army in her defence. But, alarmed by the advance of the French on Hanover, he made a treaty holding it neutral for a year, to the great disgust of the English people, who saw themselves deprived of the aid of George's principality, by his anxious fears, on one of the few occasions when it was worth having. The disgust recoiled upon Walpole, who as a peace Minister was wholly out of place in this complicated war. In the general election of 1741 his majority dwindled away, and, after subsisting precariously into the next year, the Ministry resigned at the beginning of February.

There was a fierce outburst of popular resentment against Walpole, which took shape as a demand for his impeachment. No one pursued him with more pertinacity than Pitt. Such violence appears to us extraordinary; but it must be remembered that Pitt was only obeying that tradition of vindictiveness against fallen Ministers which still lingered in English politics, that he fully believed Walpole to have been guilty of grave shortcomings of conduct and high policy, and that

he faithfully reflected the temper of the people. For this we may tax him with want of moderation, but we can hardly tax him with insincerity.[1]

Though foremost among the antagonists of Walpole, Pitt did not obtain office in the new Ministry, being personally unacceptable to the King. That Ministry was indeed far from constituting a complete triumph for the Opposition. Pulteney

[1] The charge, however, to which Macaulay gives prominence in his *Essays* would, if established, convict him of being insincere. It is alleged that Pitt and Lyttelton, with the concurrence of the Prince of Wales, offered to screen Walpole from prosecution if he would use his influence with the King in their favour. But as Mr. Walford Green, who examines the story at length in his valuable and interesting *Life of William Pitt*, has shown, there are weighty reasons for regarding its authenticity as more than doubtful. Macaulay calls it "a story which is supported by strong testimony, and which may be found in so common a book as Coxe's *Life of Walpole.*" It does not appear at all in the first edition of Coxe, and it rests on the biassed testimony of Glover. Further, it was recounted to Glover by the Prince of Wales in 1747, when the latter was full of hostility towards Pitt. Horace Walpole knew nothing of it. It represents Sir Robert as rejecting the offer "with the utmost contempt"; yet as a matter of fact he made overtures to the Prince before his fall. Finally, it represents the Prince as making overtures to Walpole when his true interest was undoubtedly to wait for advances from the Court. On the whole, it must be said that both the character and the credentials of the story are far from convincing.—*Vide* Green's *William Pitt* (1901), pp. 19–23.

had virtually effaced himself. At a moment when there was an almost universal call for him to lead, he remembered an old incautious pledge that he would never take office; and, with incredible want of discretion, while refusing a department he accepted a seat in the Cabinet and a peerage. He never again recovered the confidence of the people or obtained a commanding influence in politics. The Ministry, as actually formed under the nominal leadership of Lord Wilmington, was really a coalition between the followers of Walpole and the Opposition Whigs. Of the latter the chief representative was Carteret; of the former, the Duke of Newcastle, Henry Pelham his brother, and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke remained in office. There was thus, from the first, a division in the camp. Though Walpole had fallen, he still enjoyed power vicariously through the predominance of his nominees; and, while ostensibly outside politics, his influence always made itself felt, and was finally strong enough to turn the scale in favour of the Pelhams and against Carteret.

For the moment, however, Carteret was in the ascendant. His ambition and abounding energy found full scope in conducting the European War. To Maria Theresa he rendered inestimable service. Seeing that Prussia held the key to the situation, he induced the Queen to sign the

FREDERICK THE GREAT

After the portrait by George Vander Myn

Peace of Breslau, by which, at the price of acquiescence in the loss of Silesia, she detached Frederick from France. He made ceaseless efforts to galvanise the Dutch into activity, and formed the composite army of aggression in Flanders, which fought at Dettingen. By the Treaty of Worms he pledged England anew to the continuance of the war. Yet, in spite of his undoubted ability as a War Minister, he steadily lost ground at home. To some extent this was due to intrigues within the Ministry, but much more was it the result of the vehemence with which Pitt and Chesterfield gave expression to a popular cry. Carteret was charged with sacrificing everything to Hanoverian interests. The question of Hanover had always been one on which George II. and his people parted company, and Carteret was now involved in the unpopularity of the King. The agitation reached its height when, to prevent the reduction of the Hanoverian army to its peace footing, Carteret took 16,000 Hanoverians into British pay. Pitt poured invective upon the Minister. It was but too apparent, he said, that "this great, this powerful, this formidable kingdom is considered only as a province to a despicable electorate." The troops of Hanover had "marched to the place most distant from the enemy, least in danger of an attack," and their only claim for

payment was that they had left their own country for a place of greater security. We were "hiring Hanoverians to eat and sleep."[1] While the clamour still lasted Lord Wilmington died in July 1743, and a trial of strength followed between the two sections of the Ministry. Pulteney, now Lord Bath, appeared as Carteret's candidate for the leadership; on the other side Henry Pelham was supported by the secret but still potent influence of Walpole. The contest ended in a victory for Pelham, and Carteret's extinction became only a question of time. Pitt redoubled his attacks on him. Carteret was "an execrable, a sole Minister, who seems to have drunk of the potion which poets have described as causing men to forget their country."[2] Speaking again at the beginning of 1744 on the motion for a grant to maintain Hanoverians in British pay during the year, Pitt stigmatised him afresh as "a Hanover troop Minister," and in the heat of debate he went so far as to assert that the public welfare demanded the separation of Hanover from England.[3] At last Carteret made overtures to the Opposition, but the Pelhams had been before him, and were willing to take their chief opponents into the Ministry in order to get rid of their Foreign Minister. Left now in complete

[1] Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, i. 90.

[2] Coxe's *Pelham*, i. 117.

[3] *Ibid.* i. 129.

isolation, Carteret gave up the struggle and resigned office in November 1744.

In the reconstituted administration the Bedford connection, the Cobham connection, and even a few Tories, were represented; and Henry Pelham found himself practically a Premier without opposition. But Pitt was still excluded from office. He had been promised the Secretaryship at War by the Pelhams; the Royal disfavour, however, again proved too strong. Yet, though he did not obtain office, the reconstruction of the Pelham Ministry marks an important epoch in his career. For now he relinquishes opposition, and appears for the first time as a supporter of the Government. The Pelhams pledged themselves to induce the King to admit him ultimately to office, and in return he gave them undeviating assistance.

It is this change of front which forms one of the chief of the many charges of inconsistency that have been brought against him. It is urged that, after carrying his denunciations of the Hanoverian policy of Carteret to lengths hardly compatible with loyalty to the Crown, he gave his firm support to a Ministry which simply continued that policy; and that, though he had inveighed without measure against all Carteret's principles, they were in many respects identical with his own, and were actually put into practice

by him later during his great War Ministry. Undoubtedly, there were strong points of similarity between Carteret and Pitt. Details of policy apart, they had in their tastes and character much in common. Both regarded with the indifference of disdain those details of patronage and Parliamentary intrigue which filled so considerable a place in the politics of the time. Both were penetrated with a sense of the greatness of England, and occupied themselves by choice with large schemes designed to give effect to it. The mind of Carteret, like that of Pitt, dwelt habitually and by choice in the regions of high policy. His well-known dictum—"What is it to me who is a judge or who is a bishop? It is my business to make kings and emperors, and to maintain the balance of Europe"—was one which Pitt might have echoed. And no one who reads the moving story in which Robert Wood relates how, when Under-Secretary of State in 1762, he carried to Carteret, then Lord President and lying upon his deathbed, the preliminary articles of the Treaty of Paris, and found him at first too languid to attend to them; how Carteret then roused himself, and repeated the lines from the Iliad in which Sarpedon urges upon Glaucus that, since even in peace men cannot live for ever, and death hovers over them in countless shapes, they should go forward into the battle; and how he listened

to the reading of the treaty, and recovered strength to pronounce a benediction "on the most glorious war, and the most honourable peace, this nation ever saw,"—no one who reads this story can fail to be reminded of the aspiring genius of Pitt, and the manner in which he loved to speak of "great subjects, great empires, great characters, effulgent ideas, and classical illustrations." Besides these resemblances in taste and temper, the fundamental principle of the policy of Carteret was one in which Pitt also believed. Carteret's designs were inspired by antagonism to France, and, like Pitt in the Seven Years' War, he could not rest till he had brought her to her knees. Nor can it be denied that, after Carteret's fall, Pitt as a supporter of the Ministry acquiesced in and defended the same schemes for the employment of Hanoverian troops which, when Carteret proposed them, he had violently attacked.

Pitt certainly performed a remarkable *volte face* when he linked his fortunes with the Government. Was it due solely to his desire for office? In justice to him it must be remembered that the Pelhams, in continuing Carteret's policy, continued it with a difference. Carteret's supremacy involved a real menace to England, which was no longer felt on his disappearance. His position had been a peculiar one, based on his ascendency over George II. and intimately bound up with the

Hanoverian connection. He ignored the national will. His absorbed interest in Continental politics, and the undoubted partiality for Hanover of his confidant the King, excited in England a not unnatural distrust. Carteret took no pains to make himself intelligible to the people, and in consequence he never kindled their enthusiasm. When Pitt became Minister he infused a measure of his own energy and efficiency into every department of government, and, himself representing most truly the ardent impulse of the nation, he made England organic in a sense in which she could hardly be said to have been so since the great epoch of Elizabeth. But Carteret, with all his great knowledge and ability, left no mark on the public service, and preferred diplomatic triumphs in Germany to a genuinely British policy. His glance never swept the wide horizon of England's colonial development; and while Pitt saw that the European struggle formed merely a subsidiary part of the great duel with France, to Carteret it was, we may say, not a means but an end.

These considerations may help to explain Pitt's change of attitude when Carteret was removed from the scene. At the same time an attempt to rationalise his conduct completely would be untrue to history. He had undoubtedly a keen desire for office—a desire not unparalleled in the

early careers of other British statesmen who have afterwards been accorded the fullest confidence of the nation, and not unjustifiable when we consider the use he made of power when he attained it. And no statesman ever cared less about perfect political consistency. He seems even to have taken a pride in his changes for their own sake, as though conscious of an intellectual strength and dominating force of character which would command acquiescence in his most surprising conversions. Mr. Lecky, in the great history to which all who attempt to tell any part of the story over again owe so large a debt, well observes that it is an extraordinary proof, not only of his capacity, but of the impression of sincerity which he left upon his contemporaries, that in the face of his fluctuations he should still have preserved his moral ascendency. What competent observers thought of him at this period may be gathered from a letter written in 1742 by James Oswald, in which he is compared with the great lawyer and orator Murray, the future Lord Mansfield. Murray, said Oswald, spoke like a pleader, while Pitt spoke like a gentleman and a statesman. "Murray *gains* your attention by the perspicacity of his arguments and the elegance of his diction, Pitt *commands* your attention and respect by the nobleness, the greatness of his sentiments, the strength and energy of his expressions, and the

certainty you are in of his always rising to a greater elevation both of thought and style. For this talent he possesses beyond any speaker I ever heard, of never falling from the beginning to the end of his speech, either in thought or expression. And as in this session he has begun to speak like a man of business as well as an orator, he will in all probability be, or rather at present is, allowed to make as great an appearance as ever man did in that House—I think him sincerely the most finished character I ever knew." [1]

Outside the field of politics he had attracted the attention of a remarkable personage, who testified her approval of his attacks on Carteret in the most practical fashion. In October 1744 Sarah Duchess of Marlborough passed away, bequeathing Pitt a legacy of £10,000 "upon account of his merit in the noble defence he has made for the support of the laws of England, and to prevent the ruin of his country." This was the first of the benefactions which Pitt received from admirers of his politics, and it cannot have been the least welcome. At once profuse and poor, he was on the threshold of an official career in which, by his own deliberate choice, he debarred himself from the customary methods of Ministerial plunder.

Pitt signalised his adhesion to the Pelhams by

[1] Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, i. 96.

one of those elaborately theatrical appearances in which he indulged so often in later life and from the first delighted. Taking his seat in the House "with the apparatus and mien of an invalid," he announced that he perceived a dawn of salvation to the country breaking forth, and that he would follow it as far as it would lead him. In point of fact the war went on with very indifferent results. In 1745 the British forces were defeated by Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy, and two months later followed Charles Edward's landing at Moidart, and the Jacobite rebellion. Throughout the anxious days of the Forty-five, when incompetence in high places and public apathy conspired nearly to wreck the dynasty, Pitt gave firm support to the Government. The Pelhams had continued to urge his claims to office upon the King. At last, through a false move on the part of George II., came his opportunity. Ever since the dismissal of Carteret, the King had chafed at his impotence in the hands of uncongenial Ministers; he had been compelled to admit Chesterfield, and could only just contrive to exclude Pitt. By February 1746 his powers of endurance were exhausted, and he appealed to Pulteney and Carteret, now Lords Bath and Granville respectively, to rid him of the Pelhams. As a pretext against this intrigue the Ministers resigned office

in a body. Granville with jovial optimism stepped into their places, and spent forty-eight hours in endeavouring to form a rival administration. "It was a good idea of somebody," wrote Horace Walpole, "when no man would accept a place under the new system, that Granville and Bath were met going about the streets calling *Odd man!* as the hackney chairmen do when they want a partner!!"

The scheme, which Granville himself owned was mad, failed completely, and the Pelhams returned to office, this time bringing Pitt with them as a matter of course. On February 22 he was appointed Joint Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and soon after was transferred to the more important post of Paymaster of the Forces. To previous holders of the office the Paymastership had brought enrichment in abundant measure. It was the recognised official practice to invest the large sum of public money handed to them for payment of the troops, and appropriate the interest, and also to retain a commission of ½ per cent. on all subsidies granted by Parliament to foreign Powers. Both emoluments were illegal, but for long no question had been raised against their enjoyment, and in time of war, of course, they were eminently profitable. Pitt refused to touch either of these sources of income, and contented himself with his regular official salary.

Further, when the King of Sardinia offered him a free gift equivalent to the commission which he might have levied on his subsidy, he declined it without hesitation. This probity has been called ostentatious, and so in a sense it was. But its very ostentation was salutary, for a less conspicuous act of self-denial would hardly have impressed the country. It gave at least a momentary shock to the corrupt politicians of the time, and it raised hopes among the people of a higher standard of Ministerial purity—hopes which no statesmen did more than Pitt and his great son to fulfil. It carried to them the conviction that Pitt stood on a plane above his fellows, and from thenceforward they yielded him an ungrudging confidence, which, though recalled for a moment in 1761, was never finally withdrawn.

On his colleagues in office he made a most favourable impression, and was pronounced to have the dignity of Sir William Wyndham, the wit of Pulteney, and the knowledge and judgment of Walpole. He was staunch in their support, and helped to defend the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which in 1748 put an end to the European War. The debate on the peace furnishes an interesting example of the scant attention which Pitt paid to charges of inconsistency. On this occasion Lord Egmont

ventured to observe that the claim against Spain's right of search was not so much as mentioned in the treaty. Pitt summarily dismissed the accusation. "He had once been an advocate for that claim; it was when he was a young man; but he was now ten years older, had considered public affairs more coolly, and was convinced that the claim of no search respecting British vessels near the coast of Spanish America could never be obtained unless Spain was so reduced as to consent to any terms her conquerors might think proper to impose."[1] On the other hand, he refused to be a party to any weakening of the national forces. He spoke strongly in favour of increasing the naval establishment, and "called the fleet our standing army; the army a little spirited body, so improved by discipline that that discipline alone was worth five thousand men."

[1] Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, i. 175.

CHAPTER III

THE HOUR OF CRISIS

Death of Henry Pelham—Newcastle, Prime Minister—The leadership of the Commons—Pitt passed over—His marriage with Lady Hester Grenville—Pitt and Fox mutiny against Newcastle—Fox admitted to the Cabinet—Position of Pitt—The situation in India and America—Diplomatic activity in Europe—Beginning of the Seven Years' War—Minorca and the Black Hole—Newcastle resigns—Pitt takes office with the Duke of Devonshire.

THE period 1748–1754 was a tranquil breathing space between the war that had ended and the greater war that was to follow. It was during these years, the last of his life, that Henry Pelham left most mark on English legislation. Though in no sense a remarkable man, he had industry and good business qualities, and continued not unworthily the fiscal policy of Walpole. His financial measures for reducing the interest and consolidating the branches of the National Debt were successful, and he had ample leisure

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to carry out his reforms. Parliamentary opposition was for the time being practically dead, and the interest of members centred in the prosaic discussion of commercial questions. Politics sank back into Walpolean placidity. The only vitalising influence in the country was the great movement of Methodism. It was some ten years since Whitefield had taken the momentous step of preaching to the colliers of Kingswood, and, when once the Wesleys had followed his example and the institution of lay preaching had been sanctioned, their work spread far and wide through England. By 1749 it had even gained a footing in fashionable London, and Horace Walpole wrote to Mann: "If you ever think of returning to England, as I hope it will be long first, you must prepare yourself with Methodism. I really believe that by that time it will be necessary—this sect increases as fast as almost ever any religious nonsense did." Wide as the gulf may seem between the work of the Methodists and the career of Pitt, and fully as Pitt shared the prejudice of the eighteenth-century intellect against "enthusiasm," yet Methodism, and the Evangelical revival within the Church of England to which it gave rise, co-operated most effectively with his inspiring patriotism and the sense of national greatness awakened by his administration to arouse and dematerialise the nation.

In March 1754 Henry Pelham died. The Duke of Newcastle succeeded his brother as Prime Minister, but the leadership of the House of Commons was vacant. There were three men to any of whom it might reasonably be offered: Murray, Henry Fox, and Pitt. Murray enjoyed as great prestige and power in the House as any lawyer has possessed before or after him; but his real ambition was not Parliamentary but legal, and he shrank from the turbulent life of a leader in the House of Commons. Fox might be regarded as the most natural heir of Pelham, for, like Pelham, he had been trained in Walpole's school. He had not passed through it unscathed. Walpole's influence had left him, despite his good heart and good sense, a political mercenary. But it had not impaired his social attractiveness, his courage, his readiness, and his consummate skill in debate; nor had he yet too palpably exposed his conviction that all the objects of statesmanship counted for little beside the chance which it afforded of making money.

In genius Pitt was undoubtedly first of the three men, but his very eminence made him an object of suspicion to Newcastle, and he had not yet overcome the dislike of the King. On the whole his chances were probably the smallest, and at the critical moment he was laid up with gout at Bath. After balancing the aims and

abilities of the rivals, Newcastle decided to appeal to Fox. In the negotiations which followed, the Duke's foibles were conspicuously shown. He was a timid, anxious busybody, industrious and not without domestic virtues, but filled with a consuming passion for the mean and multifarious details of bribery and patronage, which were regarded as essential to the working of the Parliamentary machine. Fox had agreed to take the Secretaryship of State on the understanding that it carried with it the management of the House of Commons and the control of the secret service money, or, to put it more plainly, the distribution of bribes. But this was the one department of government with which Newcastle was resolved not to part; and when the point was made clear to Fox, he refused to take office under such restrictions. Newcastle's obvious course was to turn to Pitt, who would have parted as readily with the administration of patronage in 1754 as he did in 1757. Instead of this, the Duke gave the leadership to a nonentity from the diplomatic service—Sir Thomas Robinson. It was an act full of audacity, for by it he deliberately discarded the great men of the House of Commons, but it was also characteristically short-sighted. The selection of Robinson was really a manifesto to the effect that the positions of the two Houses of Parliament were to be reversed, and the tradition

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

After the portrait by Hoare

of the supremacy of the Commons, which Walpole had established, ignored by carrying on the real government of the country in the Lords. It was clear that common-sense as well as ambition would unite Pitt and Fox in resistance to this attempt to put back the clock, and that they would sink their differences in order to make it impossible.

Pitt, although he did not aspire to the first place, undoubtedly took the total passing over of his claims to heart. From Bath he had written to Lyttelton and the Grenvilles on Pelham's death :—

"My dearest friends,—

"The shock of Mr. Pelham's death has affected me so powerfully as not to leave me in a proper condition to write. I am sensibly touched with his loss, as of a man, upon the whole, of a most amiable composition; his loss as a Minister is utterly irreparable in such circumstances as constitute the present dangerous conjuncture for this country, both at home and abroad. . . . My own object for the public is to support the King in quiet as long as he may have to live; and to strengthen the hands of the Princess of Wales, as much as may be, in order to maintain her power in the Government, in case of the misfortune of the King's demise. The means, as I said, suggest themselves—a union of all those in action who

are really united in their wishes as to the object; this might easily be effected, but it is my opinion it will certainly not be done." [1]

On the whole, he thought Fox stood "first of any" for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer; but it is interesting to observe that Murray occurred to him as a possible alternative. "I call this an idea only; but I think it not visionary, were it accompanied by proper temperaments." In a letter which he wrote to Richard Grenville,[2] now Lord Temple, he described Fox's position as more precarious: "Fox," he says, "is odious, and will have difficulty to stand in a future time." Other passages in these letters make it clear that he expected the claims of his little party of the Grenvilles to be substantially recognised, and he gave shrewd advice as to how they might be furthered. "Give me leave," he wrote to Temple, "to recommend to your lordship a little gathering of friends about you at dinners, without ostentation . . . a dinner to the Yorkes[3] very seasonable."

Eventually George Grenville obtained the Treasurership of the Navy, Lyttelton the Cofferership of the Household; and Legge, another friend of Pitt's, the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Pitt himself was ignored. Newcastle and Hardwicke,

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 106. [2] *Ibid.* i. 112.
[3] *i.e.* Lord Hardwicke and his relatives.

the Lord Chancellor, both seemed to realise that this required explanation, and each despatched a long apology to Pitt, the burden of which was that they had done all they could to break down the King's aversion, that an impression had been made, and that Pitt should not give up hope for the future. But this only threw him into deeper dejection, and he replied to Hardwicke with one of those laments about the Royal disfavour which show him at his weakest and his worst:—

"All ardour for public business is really extinguished in my mind, and I am totally deprived of all consideration by which alone I could have been of any use. The weight of immovable Royal displeasure is a load too great to move under; it must crush any man; it has sunk and broke me. I succumb, and wish for nothing but a decent and innocent retreat, wherein I may no longer, by continuing in the public stream of promotion, for ever stick fast aground, and afford to the world the ridiculous spectacle of being passed by every boat that navigates the same river."[1]

Brighter events, however, before long chased away his melancholy. He remained in the country, recovering health, and seeking consolation for the disappointment of his ambition among "verdant hills and sequestered valleys." In his

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 105.

private life this was a most eventful summer, for in it he became engaged to Hester Grenville, the sister of George Grenville and Earl Temple. They were married in November, a week before Parliament met.

Their surviving correspondence amply disproves Shelburne's assertion that there was no sentiment in the marriage. For twenty-three years Pitt and his wife lived together in the most unbroken intimacy of affection. Henry Fox, the model husband, in this respect and in his courage alone resembling Pitt, did not write more ardently and unremittingly to his Lady Caroline than did Pitt to Lady Hester. Alike amid the splendid triumphs of his administration, and the anxieties of the great political campaign for the Americans in his last years, Pitt always turned for full enjoyment and for consolation to the little circle at Hayes or Burton Pynsent, and during the dark hour of his eclipse Lady Hester tended him with unrelaxing care.

On the meeting of Parliament it was seen that Pitt and Fox were prepared, temporarily at least, to act in common and indulge their resentment. Pitt, who it must be remembered still held office under Newcastle, gave the first sign of rebellion in a debate on the Berwick election petition very early in the session. The scene was characteristic, and illustrates Pitt's extraordinary command of

the House of Commons. Disputed elections were then, according to invariable custom, decided by a party vote of the whole House, and on this particular occasion honourable members were listening with evident sympathy and enjoyment to stories of bribery whose truth to nature their own experience could attest. Pitt, who had been listening in the gallery, suddenly descended to the floor of the House, and in a few minutes converted his hearers from jocularity to awe by a solemn protest against such trifling, and then startled them into amazed excitement by asking if they were going to sit simply in order to "register the arbitrary edicts of one too powerful a subject." [1] The too powerful subject was, of course, Newcastle, whose unhappy lieutenant, Sir Thomas Robinson, was now placed in the most ridiculous position. Pitt and Fox united to make his life intolerable, and seldom can there have been a more powerful oratorical combination. Pitt annihilated him with lofty rebuke; Fox, under cover of mock loyalty, delivered ironical attacks. Still Newcastle did not venture to dismiss Pitt. But at last, fearing that the assault was being pressed too nearly home, he approached Fox with the offer of a Cabinet post at the beginning of 1755.

The negotiations which ensued carried Fox

[1] Fox to Hartington, November 26, 1754; *Waldegrave Memoirs*, Appendix.

into the Government and away from Pitt, and thus dissolved their short-lived alliance. It had never been quite whole-hearted. Pitt's own retrospect of it may be found in the diary of Dodington, to whom later in the year he confided a view of Fox's conduct which shows distinct traces of mortification. "He (Pitt) was ready in the last session to proceed to any lengths against the Duke of Newcastle; but, when it came to the pinch, Mr. Fox acknowledged that he could not, and went on, through the whole session, compromising everything when it began to pinch—the Reading election; the linen affair; and, when Ireland began to be a thorn, Mr. Fox's great friend, Lord Hartington, was to take it out; that by these means Mr. Fox had taken the smooth part and had left him to be fallen upon; Fox had risen upon his shoulders, but he did not blame him; and he only showed me how impossible it was for two to act together who did not stand upon the same ground." In truth, the union of Fox and Pitt, though more defensible than that famous coalition some thirty years afterwards between Lord North and Fox's son, was one which in the nature of things could not permanently endure.

Yet Pitt must not now be regarded as standing quite alone. He had behind him the whole influence of Leicester House, with which con-

nection he had once more entered into relations. Its presiding genius was now the Princess Dowager. For some time after the death of her husband, Frederick Prince of Wales, she had practically ceased to mix in politics; but now the King's design to marry her son to a princess of Brunswick had fired all her maternal jealousy and driven her into undisguised opposition. She turned all the more readily to Pitt as an ally because he had just broken with Fox, who was closely connected with her sworn foe the Duke of Cumberland.

Such was Pitt's position at a moment of immense importance in history. It may be said without exaggeration that the destiny of half the globe was at stake. Every question which had been left open at the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, or had arisen since, was now ready to be determined. In the East had just been seen the astonishing career of Dupleix. That great Frenchman had made it clear that there was no limit to the domination which a European Power might exercise in India. The English had borrowed his weapons, and, aided by the extraordinary abundance of talent among their young officers in India, above all by the daring genius of Clive, they had defeated him and become supreme in the Carnatic themselves. But the contest was as yet by no means over, and behind the fate of the Carnatic lay the fate of all India,

for it was impossible that the Europeans in the peninsula should stand still.

In the other hemisphere the future of North America awaited decision. Was the civilising power of that great continent to be France or England? The early history of their efforts in America had been a rivalry between the genius for settlement and the genius for exploration and military enterprise. England possessed a group of states stretching along the seaboard, which, amid marked differences of individuality, showed in their prosperous industry and the bracing atmosphere of their social and political life all the promise and vitality to be expected from the colonising instincts of the race. France combined paradoxically vast and vague possibilities with a narrow and almost feudal *régime*. Her intrepid explorers and devoted missionaries had, in their passage through the wilderness and along the great rivers, conceived large dreams of empire. They saw in imagination the English colonists confined to the strip of coast between the Alleghanies and the sea, while the French, controlling the chief arteries of the continent, the Ohio and the Mississippi, expanded freely from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, and exploited the heart of the continent and the unknown Far West. The actual basis of the French was Canada, a faithful reproduction of

Old France, centralised, military, and rigidly Catholic. The autocratic power wielded over the whole dominion by great governors like Frontenac, and the warlike spirit of their realm, made it a formidable foe to the English colonies, the very intensity of whose local patriotism dissuaded them from general combination for defence. Yet it was the English who were the people of the future, and were to take and transform into reality the ideas which French genius had originated but was by the medieval forms of French government forbidden to fulfil.

The pursuit of their transcontinental schemes by the French took practical shape in the project of connecting Canada with the far distant outpost of New Orleans in the south by a chain of forts along the Ohio and the Mississippi. This brought them into collision with the English settlers. The successive French garrisons were Ticonderoga, at the southern end of Lake Champlain; Fort Niagara, between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie; and Fort Duquesne, at the head of the Ohio. George Washington with a little force from Virginia had marched on the latter in 1754, but had been surrounded and forced to capitulate. Next year General Braddock was despatched against it with a force that included two regiments of British regulars. Braddock, a martinet trained in the school of the Low

Countries, was helpless before the strange phenomenon of bush-fighting, and when ambushed by a force of French and Indians his troops were disastrously swept away.

This encounter alone would have brought about a European rupture between France and England, but in the meantime there had been further hostilities as well. Boscawen with a British fleet had started in pursuit of a great French squadron that was sailing for Quebec, and had intercepted and captured two of its vessels. As soon as the news of this was brought to Europe the French Ambassador was recalled from London. Yet there was no declaration of war. The French Government was waiting to put England still further in the wrong; the English Government was in a state of complete paralysis. The King was in Hanover, and Newcastle was weeping and waving his hands at home. His indecision and incompetence reached a climax when the question arose as to what instructions should be given to Hawke, who was about to sail with a new fleet. Finally, an extraordinary decision was arrived at by which it was agreed that war was not to be declared, but that Hawke should be instructed to seize all French vessels.

The conflict was now so far seen to be inevitable that England began to look about her

SIR EDWARD HAWKE

After the portrait by G. Knapton

for allies. She first asked Austria to join her in the defence of the Low Countries and Hanover. Austria, dissatisfied with the assistance given by England in the last war, declined. Then the British Government turned to Russia, and in September 1755 Hanbury Williams concluded a treaty at St. Petersburg, in which England agreed to take into her pay 55,000 Russian troops posted on the Livonian border. The treaty itself was destined to vanish into air, but indirectly it procured England the most efficient ally in Europe. For Frederick of Prussia, hearing of its consummation, and well aware besides of the sleepless hostility of Maria Theresa and the intrigues of Saxony, saw that only prompt action could prevent his being crushed by an irresistible European combination. Distrust of France, and dread of Austria and Russia, decided him. He made overtures to England, and on January 16, 1756, was signed the Treaty of Westminster, guaranteeing the neutrality of Germany, and binding England and Prussia, in the compact phrase of Carlyle, "to attack jointly any and every armed non-German setting foot on German soil." This action on the part of Frederick produced yet another change in the relations of the Powers, and that one of the most startling in the history of the eighteenth century, for it transformed the whole

fabric of Continental diplomacy. France, abandoning all the traditions of her foreign policy, became by the Treaty of Versailles Austria's ally. Seven years before, Kaunitz, Maria Theresa's Foreign Minister, had pointed out that only by means of a French alliance could Austria recover her lost territory and humble Prussia, and his Sovereign had grasped eagerly at the idea. What once would have seemed impossible had been accomplished by the untiring efforts of the great Austrian diplomatist, by the conviction of France, brought home to her through the last war, that contests with Austria were costly and indecisive, and above all by Frederick's last move. The first Treaty of Versailles between the two countries was indeed merely defensive, binding Austria to remain neutral in the Franco-English War, and binding France to leave the Austrian Netherlands intact. But it was in itself a diplomatic revolution, and it formed the prelude to the second Treaty of Versailles, concluded the following year, by which France definitely committed herself to the Austro-Russian schemes for the partition of Prussia.

Thus the Continental Powers slowly sorted themselves in view of war. In England, too, the lines of division were being drawn more clearly. The paramount need of the hour was a Cabinet

that could be trusted to carry on the war with intelligence and vigour. It was quite evident that this was too much to expect from Newcastle. Accordingly, on the one side stood a discredited Ministry; on the other an exasperated people, and the apostle of efficiency, Pitt. Pitt was still Paymaster, but he remained in the attitude of opposition which he had taken up during his short alliance with Fox. Newcastle endeavoured to purchase his support, or even his silence, with offers of further promotion, but without avail. "Pitt," says Lord Waldegrave, "was very explicit, and fairly let them know that he expected to be Secretary of State, and would not content himself with any meaner employment." [1]

On November 13, 1755, at the reassembling of Parliament, Pitt had denounced the union of Newcastle and Fox in a famous and still unforgotten parallel. They were the Rhone and Saone of politics; "the one a gentle, feeble, languid stream, and, though languid, of no depth; the other a boisterous and impetuous torrent; but different as they are they meet at last." Five days later he was dismissed, together with Legge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and George Grenville. This placed him in financial straits, but his brother-in-law Lord Temple, who,

[1] *Waldegrave Memoirs*, pp. 44–45.

with all his faults, never lacked generosity, came to the rescue. The day after Pitt's dismissal he wrote to Lady Hester: "I must entreat you to make use of all your interest with Mr. Pitt to give his brother Temple leave to become his debtor for a thousand pounds a year till better times; Mr. Pitt will never have it in his power to confer so great an obligation upon, dear Lady Hester, your most truly affectionate brother, Temple." [1]

Pitt's hands were now free, and he was resolved to make the most of his position. The menace of French invasion brooded over the country, and the only expedient of defence that the Cabinet could think of was the importation of Hessian and Hanoverian defenders, to the shame and disgust of the English people. Pitt spoke as a statesman and a patriot when he declared for a national militia in preference to foreign mercenaries. He appeared in a new light in Parliament by introducing a lucid and comprehensive scheme for reviving that body, and, though his Bill was rejected at the beginning of 1756, it formed the substance of the Militia Act of 1757.

Then the cloud that had been gathering on the northern coast of France, and seemed about to burst over England, disappeared again, and it was

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 149.

seen that the French preparations here were only an elaborate feint to disguise a descent upon the true objective, Minorca. On April 10, 1756, a naval squadron under La Galissonière, with transports carrying an army of 16,000 men under the Duc de Richelieu, weighed anchor from Toulon. Newcastle and his colleagues had information of these movements three months before, but they were incredulous and criminally apathetic. Byng, with a wholly inadequate fleet, was not despatched to relieve Minorca till April 7. On May 20 he encountered La Galissonière off Port Mahon, and after a doubtful engagement fell back again on Gibraltar. Blakeney, a veteran of eighty, held out dauntlessly in Fort St. Philip, but after Byng's withdrawal its capture became only a question of time. On June 28 the British were obliged to capitulate, and Minorca fell into the hands of France.

All the pent-up fury of the English people broke out when the calamity was known. There was a general cry for a victim, and Newcastle was in terror, as well he might be. Minorca was not the only catastrophe of this unhappy year. More disasters were falling upon the country: in June, the seizure of Calcutta by Suraj-ud-Dowlah, and the atrocity of the Black Hole; in August, the loss of Oswego.

Pitt at this crisis described Newcastle with

great vividness and humour as a child driving a go-cart close to the edge of a precipice. He was, he said, bound to take the reins out of his hands. It seemed at last likely that he would, for in the autumn of 1756 Newcastle was deprived of his two ablest subordinates. Fox, too astute to stay in a falling Government, deserted him in October, and Murray abandoned the House of Commons for the vacant Chief Justiceship of the King's Bench. Newcastle, after appealing fruitlessly to Pitt, to Grenville, and to Egmont, resigned in November and brought his Ministry to an end not a moment too soon. The King then commissioned Fox to form a Ministry with Pitt, but the latter refused to act with his rival. Next the Duke of Devonshire was appealed to, and after much negotiation decided definitely for Pitt and not for Fox. Pitt, therefore, now for the first time attained high office as Secretary of State. Devonshire was First Lord of the Treasury and titular leader; Temple took the Admiralty, and George Grenville the Treasurership of the Navy. Legge became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

CHAPTER IV

CHATHAM AS WAR MINISTER

The Devonshire-Pitt Ministry—Cumberland contrives its fall—Administrative anarchy—Coalition of Pitt and Newcastle—Fortunes of the war—Campaigns of 1758—Brilliant successes of 1759—Continued victories in 1760—Pitt as a War Minister—Accession of George III.—His political partisanship—Opening of peace negotiations—Pitt and Choiseul—Intrusion of Spain—Pitt's "Advice to the King"—The Cabinet refuses to follow him, and he resigns.

IT was now to be seen whether Pitt was a man of action or a mere declaimer. In this first short Ministry of four months he had not time to do more than lay foundations, but what he did was enough to show that a new spirit had been infused into the Government. The army establishment was largely augmented, and, instead of the single battalion which Newcastle proposed to despatch to America, Pitt sent eight. Most remarkable of his measures was that authorising the raising of two Highland regiments (Fraser's

and Montgomery's). They were not the first, for the Black Watch was already in existence and had been conspicuous at Fontenoy; but no new regiments had been raised since the Forty-five. By thus boldly ignoring Jacobitism, Pitt did more than any man to extinguish it as a hostile force. He drew unhesitatingly on the magnificent fighting material of Scotland, and diverted the clan spirit into the service of the country. Though these particular corps, which had been suggested to him as specially fitted for the American campaign, were afterwards disbanded, a precedent was set by their formation; and they were the lineal forerunners of the splendid regiments which are still with us and have given so freely of Scottish lives and Scottish valour under the British flag. Pitt was unfeignedly proud of them, and in one of his American speeches nine years later he said it was his boast to have looked for merit among the mountains of the north, to have called it out, and to have drawn into the service of the Crown a hardy and intrepid race.

By another measure a militia was substituted for the intruding Hessians and Hanoverians. Though its numbers were cut down by the House of Lords to 32,000—half its proposed strength—it rid the country of an incubus and set free the regulars for their proper function of a foreign

service army. Finally Pitt, whom nearer knowledge was fast converting to a belief in Frederick and in the possibilities of conquering America in Germany, carried the subsidies for Prussia and Hanover, dismissing all charges of inconsistency with his accustomed nonchalance.

In spite of these practical proofs of its energy, the position of the Ministry was extremely unstable. On one point Pitt, and Temple with him, stood in complete opposition to the cry of the people. This was on the question of the fate of Byng. The finding of the court-martial upon him was that he had not done his utmost to relieve Minorca or destroy the French squadron, and the Twelfth Article of War provided no alternative in such a case to the penalty of death. The Court, however, added to the sentence a striking recommendation to mercy, setting forth "the distresses of their minds" at the sentence which the undue severity of the Article obliged them to impose. The King, the late Ministers, and the people were bent on disregarding this plea and victimising the admiral. Pitt threw himself into the breach, and with unfaltering though unavailing courage did his utmost to shield Byng from the storm of vengeance that should by rights have fallen on the head of the Ministry which sent him out.

Yet it was no popular dissatisfaction that now

threw out Pitt, but a Court intrigue. The King complained that Pitt was prolix in his interviews, and Temple pertly familiar, and he was quite prepared to listen to the Duke of Cumberland when the latter objected to taking up the command in Hanover while Pitt held office at home. Accordingly, on April 5, 1757, Temple was dismissed, and Pitt and Legge, who refused to resign, were driven out directly afterwards. The Devonshire-Pitt Ministry was no more. Brief as had been its tenure of power, it showed more promise of vigorous administration than England had known for years. It also centred the hopes of the country on Pitt as the statesman of the future. Now the rain of gold boxes, which Horace Walpole's phrase has made historic, descended on him. All the great towns offered him their freedom, and the people, long so torpid and lethargic, awoke in this common outburst of sympathy to a new sense of national life.

For eleven weeks, in the presence of a great war, there was complete political chaos. Then at the end of June Pitt returned to power. He could not be kept out of office, but the problem was how to keep him in. Chesterfield's mediation succeeded in effecting an alliance between him and his old leader Newcastle, the master of Parliamentary votes. Thus was formed the great administration to which Pitt contributed his

genius, and Newcastle his indispensable majority. Such a coalition was the only means of governing the country at the moment, and it was amply justified by results. It enabled Pitt, feeling that the ground was firm under him, to devote himself exclusively to the conduct of the war. Thus fortified, he entered with supreme confidence on his work. He had told the Duke of Devonshire that he could save the country and that no one else could. This was not the intoxication of vanity. More fully than any of his rivals he realised the greatness of the task before him, but he felt himself not unequal to it.

Temple, Legge, and Anson, all found places in the Ministry. So, most singularly, did Fox. He took the Paymastership, frankly accepting it as a sinecure, a short cut to wealth. It was probably the most ignoble decision of his life; for by it he deliberately effaced himself and sat down in silence as a subordinate of his great antagonist in order to make money. Such an action would have been venial in the case of most of his fellow-politicians; but Fox is too great a man to be easily forgiven.

When Pitt came back to office the war was everywhere in full blast. Frederick had taken the offensive in 1756, overrunning Saxony, capturing the Saxon army, and defeating the Austrians at Lobositz. In 1757 armies from every quarter of

Europe—French, Austrian, and Russian—threatened him. He committed to Cumberland, who came over in the spring, the problem of watching the French in Germany, while he himself turned suddenly on Bohemia. On May 6 he attacked the Austrians on the plateau east of Prague, defeated them after a fiercely contested struggle, and beleaguered the city.

The siege continued till the middle of June, when Frederick encountered a second Austrian army under Daun advancing tardily to the relief of Prague. Daun stood on the defensive, strongly posted; but he owed his victory over Frederick on this occasion mainly to the stubbornness of a Saxon colonel, who at the critical moment disobeyed his order to retire. The battle of Kolin, however won, was decisive. It compelled Frederick to raise the siege of Prague, and robbed him of all the fruits of his earlier victory. In July disaster overtook Cumberland. He was defeated by the French at Hastenbeck, and on September 8 signed the Convention of Klosterseven, by which the allied army evacuated Hanover.

If the outlook on the Continent was dark, the news from America was no less mortifying. Lord Loudoun's expedition against Louisburg was never seriously pressed, and Montcalm, following up his success in the previous year at Oswego, captured

Fort William Henry in August 1757. It was little wonder that for a moment Pitt's mind sank into despondency. "The day is come," he wrote to the British Ambassador at Madrid, "when the very inadequate benefits of the Treaty of Utrecht, the indelible reproach of the last generation, are become the necessary but almost unattainable wish of the present."[1] He even resorted to offering Gibraltar to Spain if she would assist in the recovery of Minorca.

Nor could the nation as yet take much comfort from his own accession to power, for the first enterprise planned by him proved an almost unrelieved failure. On September 8 a force of ten battalions under Sir John Mordaunt, who had Conway, Cornwallis, and Wolfe as his subordinates, started for Rochefort under the escort of Sir Edward Hawke with sixteen sail of the line, three frigates, five sloops, "bomb ketches, fire ships, and busses." Thanks mainly to the gallantry of Richard Howe, who commanded the *Magnanime*, the fortifications of the Ile d'Aix were destroyed and the small island itself taken; but the main object of the expedition, the attack on Rochefort, was abandoned in view of the French preparations for its defence. Amid general disgust and much recrimination Pitt's armada came home. His only overt commentary on its

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 251.

proceedings was to promote Wolfe, who "on the day after we had taken the island of Aix publicly offered to do the business with five hundred men and three ships only."

In spite of these discouragements Pitt decided to go forward and not back. Cumberland had now returned in disgrace from the Continent. Pitt endeavoured with much generosity to shield his old enemy from the anger of the King, replying, when his Majesty asserted that he had given the Duke no authorisation to sign a treaty, "But full powers, Sir, very full powers." But though he was prepared to do his best for Cumberland he had no intention of ratifying his policy, which Prussia was already stigmatising loudly as a desertion. On his recommendation, England repudiated the convention and took the Hanoverian army into her pay. If its leadership had been entrusted again to Cumberland, or a commander of his school, history might have repeated itself; but Pitt discovered in Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who was now put at its head, a great general and an efficient ally.

As if to justify Pitt's onward policy, news of successes began now, at the end of 1757, at last to come in. Before Parliament reassembled on December 1 it was known in England that Frederick had scattered to the winds the great composite army of Soubise and Prince Hildburg-

hausen at Rossbach, thereby ridding Prussia of the menace of a French invasion from the west. Still more momentous, though as yet its full significance could only have been dimly gauged, was the tidings of Clive's victory of Plassey, which had been won in June.

The estimates for 1758, which were now submitted to Parliament, showed that Pitt was determined to prosecute the war with all possible vigour. The British army was raised to a total strength of practically 100,000 men, 30,000 being allotted to service in the colonies and Gibraltar. The *personnel* of the navy was also increased. Frederick was voted an annual subsidy of £670,000, a sum most admirably invested. On these foundations a comprehensive campaign[1] in America was planned for the next year. General Abercrombie was substituted for Lord Loudoun in the chief command. Three junior officers of marked ability—Amherst, Lord Howe, and Wolfe—occupied conspicuous posts. A triple attack was to be delivered against Canada. In the north, Amherst, with Wolfe as one of his brigadiers, was to descend on Cape Breton Island and capture Louisburg; in the centre, Aber-

[1] An admirably lucid account of this, as of the other British operations in the Seven Years' War, is given by Mr. Fortescue in his *History of the British Army*, to which I am much indebted in this chapter.

crombie, with Howe under him, was to advance upon Ticonderoga, along the most direct line to Montreal and Quebec; and in the south, Brigadier Forbes was to march against Fort Duquesne. Boscawen convoyed the troops with a great fleet to America, while Hawke with one squadron watched the French Atlantic ports, and Admiral Osborne with another blockaded the exit from Toulon.

On June 8, 1758, Wolfe forced a landing on the rock-bound coast of Louisburg, and on July 27 the fortress, after an incessant cannonade from Amherst's batteries, surrendered. "The Dunkirk of America," the great naval base of France in the western seas, had passed for ever from her hands. It was here and now that Wolfe uttered his famous prophecy about North America: "This will some time hence be a vast empire, the seat of power and learning. Nature has refused it nothing, and there will grow a people out of our little spot, England, that will fill this vast space and divide this portion of the globe with the Spaniards, who are possessed of the other half."

Meanwhile Abercrombie had moved upon Ticonderoga. On July 5 his imposing force, 16,000 strong, rowed up Lake George, and next day his army landed on the west shore of the channel uniting Lake George with Lake Champlain,

WOLFE

From the portrait by Schaak in the National Portrait Gallery

and the leading column encountered the French in the forest. Here an unfortunate calamity overtook the expedition. In the skirmish Howe fell, and his loss was irreparable. He was the soul of the enterprise, and more fully than any other British officer he had imbibed the principles of colonial warfare, which he learnt from the great American ranger Rogers. Not only in America but in Europe he was the British army's pride. Pitt wrote on hearing of his death: "The loss of Lord Howe afflicts me with more than a public sorrow. He was, by the universal voice of army and people, a character of ancient times; a complete model of military virtue in all its branches."[1] Worse still was to follow. On July 8 Abercrombie, himself lingering at a distance from the field, delivered a disastrous frontal attack upon the breastworks and almost impenetrable abattis of Ticonderoga. The British loss was terrific; the Black Watch alone left nearly five hundred on the field. Montcalm with a little force of not 4000 men had rolled away Abercrombie's army in disastrous confusion. One gleam of success, however, lit up these central operations before they closed. In August, Bradstreet, a New Englander, took a flying column from the main army and captured Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario. This cut the French line of communica-

[1] Pitt to Grenville, *Grenville Papers*, i. 262.

tion, and made possible the success of the third line of attack—that upon Fort Duquesne.

For this, Brigadier Forbes had Montgomery's Highlanders and a motley host of provincials, far inferior in quality to those with Abercrombie. Forbes was himself a Scot, trained first in the school of Continental and then of colonial war; full of expedients and of enterprise, as his preference of the short untrodden route by Pennsylvania to the longer but familiar road to Fort Duquesne showed. On this expedition he displayed wonderful tenacity. Racked by an internal disease so painful that he had to be carried on a litter, he pushed on through rain and snow across the mountains until in the late autumn he reached his goal. Bradstreet's capture of Fort Frontenac had delivered Fort Duquesne into his hands, for the French commander, finding his supplies cut off, was obliged to evacuate it. On November 25 Forbes took possession of the abandoned post, rechristening it Pittsburg.

Meanwhile in Europe Prince Ferdinand, who had taken over the allied army towards the end of 1757, steadily drove back the French, and on June 23, 1758, completely defeated them at Crefeldt. This opportune confirmation of Pitt's policy determined him to engage still more vigorously in the German War. "We are sending," he wrote to Grenville directly after it,

"twelve squadrons of English cavalry to this glorious school of war." [1] A few days later it was decided to send infantry as well, and the total number of reinforcements was more than tripled.

Frederick in this year encountered the Russians for the first time. The victory of Leuthen over the Austrians (December 5, 1757) had given Silesia into his hands; and he now turned on the great Russian army, which had been slowly advancing westwards through Prussia, and in a three days' battle at the end of August defeated it after much carnage at Zorndorf. Though during his absence the Austrians again assailed Silesia and Saxony, and though he was severely checked by Daun at Hochkirchen in October, he succeeded with consummate adroitness in clearing both countries before the end of the year.

Pitt's attention was by no means exclusively absorbed by the Canadian and the German Wars. In the course of 1758 he sent out two expeditions to the Guinea coast, and captured the French West African settlements of Goree and Senegal. With less success he resumed nearer home his raids on the French coast. Two elaborate attacks were designed—one upon St. Malo and one on Cherbourg. The first was quite abortive, and, though the second succeeded in destroying the

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 244.

docks and shipping of Cherbourg, it was marred by a costly reverse to the British infantry by land.

These descents on France were by far the least successful part of Pitt's policy, and whatever moral effect they may have produced on the French was probably more than counterbalanced by the loss in time, life, and money which they occasioned to the British army. Yet the record of 1758 was on the whole a shining testimony to Pitt. A great step forward had been taken in America; in Germany a general had been discovered for the allies in Prince Ferdinand, and Frederick, our ally, was contending indomitably against vast odds; while the successes in West Africa foreshadowed still further colonial acquisitions.

If 1758 had been successful, 1759 was glorious. English history hardly records a more memorable year. For America Pitt had again devised a great scheme of operations. Amherst, who had been appointed to the chief command in place of Abercrombie, was to advance, as the latter had tried to do, northwards by Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Wolfe was to move directly on Quebec, and it was intended that Amherst, when his own work was done, should join his subordinate there or divert French attention by an attack on Montreal. Amherst's march proved

quite successful as far as it went, but it was too slow. The French fell back before him, abandoning Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and both these coveted posts passed into his hands. Another British column captured Fort Niagara, thus finally severing Canada from the French outposts in the west. But it was now August, and, by the time Amherst was ready to move forward again from Crown Point, the campaigning season was almost over. The diversion could not be executed, and the northern army was left to fight its battles by itself.

There is not space here, nor perhaps is there need, to narrate once more the heroic and familiar tale of Wolfe. The skilful navigation of the St. Lawrence, followed by the long and apparently hopeless leaguer of Quebec; the bombardment of the city; the daring passage of the fleet into the upper channel of the river; Wolfe's abortive attack, wrecked by the impetuosity of his grenadiers, upon the French lines at Beauport; his illness and recovery; the landing by night at the Anse du Foulon, and the appearance of British troops on the tableland in the dim light of dawn; the infatuated decision of the French to give battle; the triumph of discipline by which the British reserved their fire and then delivered a volley, the blasting effect of which has hardly a parallel in war; Wolfe's fall in the moment of

victory,—all this is one of the best-known passages in the military annals of our race. Indescribable elation was felt in England at the news of the battle of Quebec, mixed with mourning for the loss of Wolfe. This was but the bare tribute due to an achievement which determined the history of a continent and produced results the full and final operation of which we can hardly even yet foresee.

Wolfe had owed not a little of his success to the admirable co-operation of the navy, and everywhere in this year the supremacy of British sea-power became apparent. France, ignoring that supremacy, had conceived the design of invading England and Scotland—a design of which Thurot's momentary seizure of Carrickfergus in 1760 proved the only outcome. The main scheme depended on the junction of the Toulon squadron with that of Brest. This was prevented by Boscawen, who gave chase to the French Mediterranean fleet when it slipped out in August, and crushed it on the Portuguese coast at Lagos. The crowning blow was delivered by Hawke in November. Gales had driven him into Torbay for shelter, and allowed Conflans with the Brest squadron to escape. Returning, he followed the French fleet with superb coolness into the reefs and shoals of Quiberon, and there, in a raging storm and formidable sea, ground the

THE DEATH OF GENERAL WOLFE

After the painting by B. West

enemy to pieces on a lee shore. Few naval victories have been more marvellously snatched from forbidding circumstances.

In the Eastern seas also the influence of the British navy was decisive. This was the last phase of the struggle for the dominance of India, in which both the French power and the Dutch were to fall; but England's success would have been impossible but for her mastery of the sea. It was this that enabled her to throw reinforcements into India at the hour of need, and the unflagging persistence of Pococke, who commanded the British fleet on the Coromandel coast, drove the French squadron under d'Aché from Indian waters, and thus sealed the fate of Lally's efforts by land. In the military operations of 1759 in India the British name that stands out most prominently is that of Colonel Forde. At the beginning of the year he was campaigning in the Northern Sirkars. Capturing Masulipatam and its French garrison in the face of tremendous odds, he destroyed by his victory French influence at the court of Haidarabad. In the autumn he went back to Bengal, and there, at Chandernagore and Badara, he twice defeated the Dutch, and shattered for ever the hopes which they had cherished of rebuilding their ascendency.

In the long tale of Imperial and maritime achievements the first great success in the West

Indies must not be forgotten. Its record is one of the romances of the war. Forbes's expedition to Fort Duquesne, Wolfe's triumph at Quebec, Forde's storming of Masulipatam, were not carried out in the teeth of more deterring obstacles than the conquest of Guadaloupe by Barrington and his indefatigable subordinates. After three months of unflagging effort the island was subjugated at the beginning of May.

In Europe the year was made illustrious by Prince Ferdinand's victory of Minden. It was marred by Sackville's disgraceful inertia, "when the moment came, and the man was not there, except in that foggy, flabby, and for ever ruinous condition."[1] But not even Sackville's shortcomings could dim the glory won by the British infantry in their advance—almost as astonishing to onlookers as the Light Brigade's charge at Balaclava—which pulverised the seventy-three squadrons of French cavalry massed in the centre of the hostile line. Ferdinand's success was invaluable to Frederick, who was now struggling desperately against the Russians, and in the same August suffered the fearful defeat of Kunersdorf.

Frederick's straits and Wolfe's death were the only misfortunes which chequered this extraordinary year. Canada had been practically gained, British supremacy in India was assured,

[1] Carlyle, *Frederick the Great*, bk. xix. ch. 3.

and the conquest of the West Indies was begun; while in Europe both on land and sea, at Minden and at Quiberon, England had won glorious laurels. She stood indisputably first among the Powers; never before had she been so great. It was no inappropriate coincidence that still further ennobled 1759, already so illustrious, by the names of the great men who were born in it—the younger Pitt, the poet Burns, and Wilberforce the Parliamentarian and philanthropist.

In 1760 the tide of success seemed only to rise higher. Pitt's estimates for the year had provided for a fresh augmentation of the army, and men and money were unsparingly voted. In Canada he meant to reap the fruits of the victories of the previous year and destroy the last strongholds of French power. With this object he planned a concentric attack upon Montreal. The whole movement was excellently organised by Amherst. At the beginning of September three British forces—his own, which had descended the St. Lawrence from the west; Murray's, which had come up the river from Quebec; and Haviland's, which had advanced by Lake Champlain from the south—united before Montreal; and before this massed army of 17,000 men the French garrison, hardly more than 2000 strong, was helpless. On September 8 the city surrendered, and Canada was won.

In the East Eyre Coote fought on January 22 the decisive battle of Wandewash, which robbed France of Madras. At the beginning of the next year followed the fall of Pondicherry, closing Lally's tempestuous Indian career, and annihilating the last vestige of French power in the peninsula. In Europe Prince Ferdinand obtained two brilliant successes at Emsdorf and Warburg, the British cavalry on both occasions behaving with great dash and gallantry.

We have been chronicling the mere outlines of an era of unexampled triumphs. The bare facts are sufficient to force on the mind some conception of Pitt's abilities as an organiser of victory; but it will not be out of place here to dwell somewhat more fully on what is generally agreed to be one of his chief titles to enduring fame. The genius of a great War Minister may be primarily political or primarily military. He may conceive a large national policy involving an appeal to arms, and preside over its execution; or he may be a master of the technique of military detail, a great departmental chief, and an expert in the art of war. Bismarck may be taken, broadly speaking, as an historic example of the first class, Louvois of the second. Pitt cannot strictly be compared to either, for in many respects he played the part of both. Bismarck could trust implicitly to Roon and

Moltke to forge and use his instrument of war; Pitt had, if not to create, at least to resuscitate an army, and then to supervise its operations. Pitt, again, was the supreme director of British policy during his administration, whereas Louvois was but the agent of Louis XIV.

Pitt's revival of the British army first claims attention. When he came into office he found depleted garrisons and a dispirited service. With each year of his administration he effected a progressive increase in the numbers of the army; and even more valuable than the augmentation itself was the character of the steps which he took in order to attain it. Mention has been already made of his two most conspicuous steps in this direction. By utilising the militia for home defence he strengthened automatically the striking power of the regular army abroad. By the enlistment of Highlanders he permanently widened the area of recruiting. But all such measures might have proved ineffective if Pitt had failed to find leaders for his big battalions, and it is a true instinct which has fastened on his selection of officers as a matter of the first importance. Wolfe is of course the classic instance; but most of the other prominent commanders in Canada—Amherst, Howe, Murray, and Monckton—were also Pitt's men. He may be said to have set a new standard for

the British officer, the only standard which can ever be of service to an army like our own. The ideal of enterprise and resource and adaptability to the immense variety of physical conditions that presents itself to an army, which, like our own, has to campaign in every quarter of the globe, was for the first time comprehensively outlined in the days of Pitt.

The narrative of operations will have made it clear that Pitt, though essentially a statesman, had yet to perform some of the chief functions which we usually associate with a modern General Staff. He had indeed his expert advisers, Ligonier and Anson, but his was the directing brain. The intrusion of a civilian, even of a civilian of genius, into the sphere of war could hardly be hoped to escape altogether without disaster. And, as we have seen, Pitt was occasionally at fault. His series of raids on the French coast was a costly mistake. His Canadian schemes for 1758 and 1759, involving the most punctual and accurate co-operation of all concerned, made little or no allowance for the inevitable obstacles interposed by climate, and the difficulties of transport in the vast wilderness which formed the scene of war. Nor does it appear that he was sufficiently careful to economise life, and so lessen the drain caused by a struggle of unprecedented dimensions.

But though these were errors of significance, they were still errors of detail. Such mistakes are the inevitable penalty that has to be paid for entrusting the control of an imperfectly organised system to civilian hands. They weigh as little by the side of Pitt's work in that higher region where statesmanship and strategy merge in one another. Here he was unsurpassed. To his firm grasp of the two cardinal factors in the situation modern England owes her empire. He saw that the contest with France was one for world-wide ascendency, and that its true arena lay in the colonies and on the sea. At the same time he soon discerned the possibility of conquering America in Germany, to use his own immortal epigram. He played skilfully and successfully on the besetting French passion for Continental war. France allowed herself to be dragged at Austria's chariot-wheels; she squandered her resources on campaigns that did not concern her, and starved her garrisons over sea. Pitt, when he saw that Frederick and Ferdinand were to be trusted, sent men and money in an ever-increasing ratio to the Continent. But he never lost sight of the fact that the German War was only valuable to England as a diversion, and that her real prize was to be the maritime empire which was falling from the hands of France.

It is a matter of tradition that to secure

efficiency of administration he ruled all the public departments with coercive sway. He threatened their chiefs with impeachment if they should be found wanting, and he had no scruples about making the Board of Admiralty sign despatches the contents of which they were not allowed to see. In the hands of anyone else such methods must have led to instant and irretrievable calamity; but Pitt was no ordinary man. He knew what he was about when he said that he could save the nation, and never has it moved more rapidly to greatness than when impelled by the driving power of his dictatorial will. Yet it would be wholly misleading to suppose that mere force was the foundation of his ascendency. He was brought into office by an irresistible wave of popular enthusiasm, and he retained office because the people continued to believe in him. He drew his strength from moral causes. His ardent patriotism awakened all the sleeping energies of the nation, and called into existence a depth of feeling and fortitude unsuspected in that leisured age. Under his guidance his fellow-countrymen rose above themselves, and they never forgot the source from which their inspiration came.

So long as Pitt remained Minister the people would follow him. But his position was now shaken by changes in another quarter. On October 25, 1760, George II. died, and the

accession of his grandson marks a dividing-line in English history. Brought up in almost entire seclusion by the Princess Dowager his mother, and her counsellor Lord Bute, the character of George III. showed traits that were strangely compounded. Unlike his predecessors, he was a pattern of the domestic virtues, and had a real sense of religion. But his mother's admonition, "George, be a king!" had, to the misfortune of his country, indelibly imprinted itself upon his mind. He was educated to believe that a constitutional monarch was a monarch in fetters, and the rapidity with which, from the hour of his accession, he adopted the opposite policy of personal rule showed that the Princess's teaching had fallen on responsive ground. George III. did not shrink from immoral means to carry out an unconstitutional end. Armed with the whole influence of Crown patronage, he descended, like Walpole and Newcastle, into the arena of Parliamentary corruption, and plunged with evident enjoyment into the business of sordid electioneering. At the same time he traded unblushingly on the natural sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the throne. It was this political partisanship, coupled with certain very real failings—his uncandid and ungenerous temper, his invincible obstinacy, and his extraordinary propensity for seeing only the wrong side of a

case—that produced most of the many calamities of his long and chequered reign. His immediate object at present was to build up a Court party. Such a party was, however, an exotic which required careful nursing; and it was clear that it would never mature in the bracing atmosphere of public spirit and patriotic feeling diffused by Pitt. The King accordingly resolved to cut down the Minister, whatever the results might be to the nation.

He gave speedy signs of his intention. Bute was made a Privy Councillor before the end of October, and the draft of the King's speech, which he composed in concert with George III., referred to the great contest that was still raging as "a bloody and expensive war." Only upon making strong representations could Pitt succeed in getting the obnoxious epithets altered to "just and necessary." Early in 1761 Legge was dismissed from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and his place was taken by Lord Barrington, an undisguised "King's Friend," as members of the new Court party came by a lamentable abuse of language to be called. Finally Holderness, Pitt's fellow Secretary of State, was induced, at the price of a pension and the reversion of a sinecure, to yield his place to Bute.

The King's designs were furthered by a distinct cleavage in the Cabinet on the question of the

GEORGE III

After the portrait by Ramsay

continuance of the war. Partly from sheer pique at Pitt's monopoly of power, partly from a genuine desire for peace, the great Whigs took up an attitude of almost open hostility towards him. "The treatment that the greatest and most respectable persons meet with," Newcastle wrote this summer to Hardwicke in a letter full of unconscious humour, "if they presume to differ with anything that has been done or shall be proposed, and the making personal points of what ought to be free, cool, and deliberate debate and consideration amongst those whom his Majesty has appointed for that purpose,—this conduct has, and will drive every person from the Council who is at liberty to go. The Duke of Bedford has already taken the resolution to come no more. The Duke of Devonshire the same."[1] Pitt's view was that we still stood to gain much. He had despatched an expedition to Belleisle, he contemplated further conquests in the French West Indies, and he did not mean to abandon Frederick. On the other side it was urged that the war had now become almost wholly Continental, and that England's burden of debt was already vast.

The foreign Powers were so far conscious of exhaustion that negotiations for peace were begun in the spring of 1761. There was a congress at

[1] *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 30, 31.

Augsburg, to which England sent plenipotentiaries, on the subject of the European War; and a separate negotiation between France and England, to carry on which Hans Stanley, grandson of the celebrated Sir Hans Sloane, was sent to Paris, while M de Bussy came to London.

France proposed that she herself and England should retain their respective conquests, and named certain dates after which any fresh conquests that were made should be null and void. Pitt at first, while agreeing to the broad principle suggested, considered that the day of signing the treaty should be the only limit to determining the validity of future acquisitions. On June 17, however, he accepted the French dates for fixing the *uti possidetis*, on condition that the peace should be made obligatory irrespective of the negotiations at Augsburg, and that its preliminaries should be ratified by August 1. By the time he despatched this memorial Belleisle had been taken, and he declared his intention "to enter into compensation for that important conquest." Choiseul, the French Foreign Minister, then handed to Stanley a document called the "little leaf,"—which was, said Stanley, "in shape and size more like a *billet-doux* to a lady than the memorial for a peace between two great nations."[1]

[1] Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii. Appendix V.

This contained Choiseul's own ideas on the subject of compensations. It included among other stipulations proposals about the frontiers of Canada, which Pitt called "captious and insidious . . . in the view to establish what must not be admitted, namely, that all which is not Canada is Louisiana."[1] Pitt replied with far more sweeping claims: the cession, without new limits, of all Canada and its dependencies, Cape Breton, and the right of fishery; the cession of Senegal and Goree; the reduction of Dunkirk; the equitable partition of the neutral islands; the restoration of Minorca and destruction of the French settlement in Sumatra; and the restitution of all conquests in Hanover, Hesse, and Westphalia. The points to which Choiseul demurred in these proposals were the yielding of the right of fishery, the cession of Goree, and the dismantling of Dunkirk; he also showed signs of recalcitrance with regard to the German conquests and the compensation for giving up Minorca.

An agreement would probably have been arrived at but for the sudden intrusion of Spain into the negotiations. On July 15 Choiseul presented a memorial in which he urged certain Spanish claims with regard to the Newfoundland fishery, the British settlements in the Bay of Honduras, and the restitution of prizes taken

[1] Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, i. 544.

under the Spanish flag. Pitt received it with indignation, and haughtily refused to allow the disputes with Spain "to be blended in any manner whatever in the negotiation of peace between the two Crowns." He did not, however, close the negotiations without making one more offer to Choiseul. This contained substantial concessions with regard to the fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off the Newfoundland coast in return for the reduction of Dunkirk. On the question of the German conquests and the right to support Continental allies he remained firm. No agreement could be arrived at on these last points, and in September the negotiations dropped.

Undoubtedly "the truly British spirit" which Stanley described as reigning throughout Pitt's State papers militated against the success of his diplomacy. It annoyed Choiseul and mortally offended Spain. Still his last proposals were liberal, and Choiseul's reply approximated to them very closely. A settlement might have been effected but for France's entanglement with Spain, which Pitt was amply justified in resenting. How far he had information of the Family Compact between the two Crowns signed in August of this year is still disputed. In any case, he judged the situation with great boldness and decision. He knew enough to convince

him that the two Bourbon kingdoms were linked in some menacing combination, and that Spain was pushing on naval preparations which in spite of her disavowals could only be meant for war. Choiseul himself had told Stanley that if peace were not made France would have new allies. In these circumstances Pitt considered that the right course was to strike first and to strike quickly. On September 18, in conjunction with Temple, who was now practically his one adherent in the Cabinet, he submitted the celebrated "Advice to the King," urging the immediate recall of the British Ambassador from Madrid and the declaration of war against Spain. Neither George III. nor the Ministry would follow him. On October 2 there was a final Cabinet meeting, at which Pitt's policy was rejected. Pitt thereupon proudly declared to his colleagues that he had been called to the Ministry by the voice of the people, to whom he considered himself accountable, and that he would no longer remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was not allowed to guide. Three days later he and Temple laid their resignation before the King, and the most brilliant administration of English history was ended.

CHAPTER V

THE PEACE OF PARIS

Honours pressed upon Pitt—His appearance at the Guildhall—Crowning victories of the war—Attitude of the Ministry—The Peace of Paris—Methods employed to carry it—Pitt on the Peace—George Grenville becomes Premier—Wilkes and the *North Briton*—Differences between the King and Grenville—Negotiations with Pitt—The Bedfords join Grenville—Persecution of Wilkes—Pitt and the Wilkes question.

REWARDS and honours were immediately pressed upon Pitt. So unprecedented an administration could scarcely have been passed over without notice, and doubtless the King felt for him a measure of unaffected gratitude. But there was also a sinister design to undo him as a popular favourite by making him the recipient of Royal favours, and for a moment it seemed likely to succeed. Pitt, after refusing the governorship of Canada with £5000 a year and without the obligation of residence, and the chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster with the same salary, accepted a peerage for his wife and a

pension of £3000 a year, for three lives, for himself. As soon as these rewards, which were published in the same *Gazette* that announced Pitt's resignation, were made known, there was a bitter popular outcry. Perfectly natural and intelligible as was his acceptance of them, and positively meagre as they were when compared with his services—Lord Holderness had just received a larger sum as the price of his resignation — Pitt's independence had been so remarkable that he was judged by a standard of his own. The people left him as though disillusioned. Horace Walpole complained to Conway that he had been "the dupe of his disinterestedness." Two months later Fox was still rubbing his hands over what he thought the discomfiture of his rival, and wrote down an incautious sentence which has survived to show the futility of political prophecies dictated by malevolence. "It is already growing no paradox," he says in the valuable memoir which, together with the letters of that most fascinating of eighteenth-century personages, Lady Sarah Lennox, has been lately given to the public, "it will perhaps by the time these papers shall be read be an allowed truth, that Mr. Pitt, who has made so great a figure these four years, was what Lord Winchelsea four years ago said he was, a very silly fellow." [1]

[1] *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, i. 57.

In point of fact, Pitt's unpopularity lasted not much more than a week. On October 15 he wrote a little manifesto to the Town Clerk of London, which speedily set him right with the people. "I resigned the seals on Monday, the 5th of this month," he said in the course of it, "in order not to remain responsible for measures which I was no longer allowed to guide. Most gracious public marks of his Majesty's approbation of my services followed my resignation. They are unmerited and unsolicited; and I shall ever be proud to have received them from the best of sovereigns."[1] As Burke said, it was a shame that any defence should have been necessary. There was an immediate reaction in his favour. The Common Council passed a vote of thanks to him, and York, Exeter, Chester, Stirling, and other towns followed their example. Finally, there was a great demonstration of confidence on Lord Mayor's day. Pitt was pressed to join the Royal procession to the Guildhall, and his appearance produced an extraordinary scene, of which Nuthall, Pitt's solicitor and intimate friend, has left us an amusing record.[2] The young King and Queen were hardly noticed. Bute's carriage was at first supposed to be Pitt's, but as soon as the mistake was discovered the people made their feelings clear by cries of "No Bute!" "No New-

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 158, 159. [2] *Ibid.* ii. 166–168.

castle salmon!" Pitt himself passed through the crowded streets amid storms of cheering, and at the Guildhall he was not less enthusiastically received. Bute had taken the precaution to surround himself with "a party of bruisers, with George Stephenson, the one-eyed fighting coachman, at their head;" but before they reached their destination Stephenson "had been obliged to retire under the chariot, and with great difficulty got into Guildhall Coffee-house, in great disgrace and trampled under foot." Pitt's action on this occasion has been censured as unbecoming, and, as he must more or less have foreseen what the result of his appearance would be, he can hardly be acquitted of having shown disrespect to the King. That he realised this afterwards is clear from the endorsement, in Lady Chatham's hand, on the note from Beckford urging him to go: "Mr. Beckford, 1761; to press my lord to appear with Lord Temple; to which he yielded for his friend's sake; but, as he always declared, both then and afterwards, against his better judgment."[1]

When Parliament met, Pitt spoke with moderation of his late colleagues, only laying stress on the paramount necessity of continuing the war in Germany. In a very few weeks the policy for which he had fought his final battle in the Cabinet received a triumphant justification.

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 165.

Spain, having got her silver-ships from America safely home, made no secret of her warlike preparations and her alliance with France. The Spanish diplomatists assumed a tone which they would never have dared to use to Pitt. At length, on December 10, the English Ambassador was withdrawn from Madrid, and on the last day of the year war was declared.

Pitt might have been excused if he had improved the opportunity thus offered him against the Ministers who, after declaiming against war with Spain, were obliged to have recourse to it as soon as they had driven him from office. Instead, he made the kindling appeal to patriotism, which is one of his best remembered utterances. "Be one people!" he said in the House of Commons. "This war, though it has cut deep into our pecuniary, has augmented our military faculties. Set that against the debt, that spirit which has made us what we are. Forget everything but the public! For the public I forget both my wrongs and my infirmities."

Then followed a series of brilliant victories. The ardour and efficiency which Pitt had inspired in the public services still produced great results in spite of his removal. Martinique was conquered in February 1762, and, one after another, all the French West Indies fell into our hands. Then fell Havannah, the richest city of the

Spanish Main; and in October came a crowning success in the Far East, Sir W. Draper capturing Manilla and the Philippines. These triumphs were held to redound not to the credit of the Ministry but to that of Pitt; for all knew that he had urged on the Spanish War, that he was responsible for the Martinique expedition, and that he had planned the attack upon Havannah. His single eloquence, said Horace Walpole, could, like an annihilated star, shine many months after it had set. "I shall burn all my Greek and Latin books—they are histories of little people. The Romans never conquered the world till they had conquered three parts of it, and were three hundred years about it. We subdue the globe in three campaigns; and a globe, let me tell you, as big again as it was in their days."

Within the Ministry there was disunion. Newcastle had exulted over Pitt's departure, but before long he regretted that he had exchanged Pitt's hauteur for the deliberate insolence of Bute. Ever since Pitt's resignation he had been carefully kept in ignorance of all that was in progress, and did not know even of the decision to declare war on Spain until the day before the step was taken. He wrote to Hardwicke on December 30, 1761, that he had received that morning an "extraordinary uninforming note

from my Lord Egmont," and also "from my porter, a summons for a council, I think this day, upon what I know not."[1] By the end of May 1762 he could bear it no longer, and, having learned that Bute intended to withdraw England from the German War and not to renew Frederick's subsidy, he resigned office. Pitt contended to the last for the policy of continuing the war not only in Germany but in the Peninsula, where a fresh area of conflict had been opened by Spain's shameless invasion of Portugal. He did not mean, he said, that we should bear Portugal on our shoulders, but only set him on his legs and put a sword in his hand. France, he affirmed, was almost a ruined nation. But, while the tide of victory was rising higher, the Cabinet thought only of making peace at any price. The Duke of Bedford spoke of England's conquests in accents of positive alarm, and it was made abundantly clear to the hostile Powers that if they asked for peace the English Ministers would be only too ready to give it them. Bute was carrying on secret negotiations through Count de Viri, the Sardinian Ambassador in England. Dark charges of want of faith were also brought against him. He treated with Maria Theresa without Frederick's knowledge, and was said to have pressed Russia to adhere to

[1] *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 102, 103.

her alliance with Austria in order to bring the King of Prussia to his knees. After much private diplomacy he put the settlement of the peace into the hands of Bedford, and the preliminaries were soon decided upon.

In North America France ceded to England the whole province of Canada, together with Nova Scotia and Cape Breton; but she retained her fishing rights on the Newfoundland coast, and within the Gulf of St. Lawrence at three leagues' distance from the shore, and she acquired two little islands, St. Pierre and Miquelon, as a shelter for her fishermen. In the West Indies England kept Grenada and the Grenadines, St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago, but she restored Guadaloupe, Martinique, St. Lucia, Marie Galante, and Desirade to France. In Africa she kept Senegal and ceded Goree. In India all conquests made since 1749 were mutually restored; France undertook, however, not to garrison or fortify her Bengalese factories, and she acknowledged the English candidates in the Carnatic and the Deccan. In Europe she surrendered Minorca, evacuated her German conquests, and demolished the walls of Dunkirk.

Spain gave up Florida, which completed the line of the English colonies in America to the south, renounced her claim to fish off Newfoundland, acknowledged the English right to cut

logwood in the bay of Honduras, on the demolition of the English fortifications there, and agreed to British adjudication on prizes captured under the Spanish flag. But she took back Havannah as compensation, and recovered Manilla and the Philippines, tidings of whose conquest did not come until the preliminaries were already signed, without even paying the ransom for the private property of Manilla to which she was pledged. The bare outlines of the Peace show that it was made on conditions no more favourable than could have been obtained by Pitt a year before, since when France had suffered a monotony of defeat. And when, on closer investigation, we see the spirit in which the English Ministers made terms, and examine the value of the mutual restitutions, there is still greater reason for dissatisfaction. Bute appears to have been anxious only to dispose of everything with as much speed as possible. Frederick he abandoned so perfunctorily that nothing but the prompt action of the King enabled him to secure the German territory, as to which Bute had simply stipulated that France was to cede it, without saying whether to enemies or allies. Alone in the Cabinet George Grenville made a stand for the national honour. He protested strongly against the surrender of Guadaloupe and St. Lucia; but while he was ill in bed Bute

took advantage of his absence to call a council and get rid of the former island, the value of which had considerably increased during the few years it had been a British possession. Similarly, Bute made no scruples about giving up the great prize of Havannah, and would actually have surrendered it without compensation if Grenville had not insisted on the acquisition of Florida, which was a very meagre exchange. We yielded Martinique, the fruit of a costly expedition, and St. Lucia, which Rodney described as second only to Martinique in strategic importance. But, of all the shortcomings of the Peace, the most characteristic was the total loss of Manilla, which passed from us uncompensated because no stipulation of any kind had been made with regard to it in the preliminaries, which were signed before the news of its capture arrived. France, on the other hand, though in yielding her conquest of Minorca she ceded us a prize, could not have retaken by arms the West Indian islands which we restored to her; and still less could Spain have recovered, otherwise than by negotiation, Havannah and Manilla.

None the less, and now, at any rate, when the dust of the political struggles that hung round the Peace of Paris has long been laid for ever, we can hardly deplore a treaty which gave England

gains so solid and unprecedented, and set the stamp on her dominion of the sea. It was otherwise in November 1762, when the preliminaries were signed. To the unpopularity which Bute derived from his position as a Royal favourite and his Scotch nationality was now added a disgust at the Peace, and a general belief that he had been bribed to make it. But by fair means or foul he had to get the consent of Parliament to what he had done, and he turned to look for a colleague unscrupulous enough to corrupt the House of Commons and strong enough to face Pitt. Fox, who still wanted a peerage and might fairly be called upon to earn it, was clearly the man. George Grenville, who had neither the audacity nor the stamina to carry a peace of which he disapproved, made way for him in the leadership and became instead First Lord of the Admiralty. Fox immediately opened a characteristic campaign. At the Pay Office members of Parliament disposed of their support for the best bargains they could make, £200 for a vote on the treaty being the very lowest sum taken. Twenty-five thousand pounds of public money were thus squandered in one morning, and in a fortnight Fox had made certain of a substantial majority. At the same time victory was made doubly sure by a vast proscription. The great Whigs were smitten down without respect of persons. With his own

hand the King dashed the Duke of Devonshire's name off the list of the Privy Council. The Duke of Newcastle, the Duke of Grafton, and Lord Rockingham were dismissed from their lord-lieutenancies, and Fox was not content with conspicuous victims. Everyone who was found to owe the smallest salary in the public service or on the list of public benefaction to a Whig patron was deprived of it, and neither age nor sex was spared.

Even with their bought majority the Ministers looked forward apprehensively to the meeting of Parliament. Popular clamour rose daily higher, and they had still to reckon with the eloquence of Pitt. Parliament met at the end of November, and on December 9 the preliminaries of the Peace were discussed in both Houses. In the Lords, despite the opposition of the Whig dukes, they were approved without a division. Pitt, who was suffering painfully from gout, was not present at the opening of the debate in the Commons, and there was much speculation as to whether he would appear at all. At length cheering in the Lobby was heard, the doors opened, and Pitt, "at the head of a large acclaiming concourse," was borne in by his servants and set down inside the bar. There he crawled to his seat on his crutch, and with the aid of his friends, "not without the sneers of some of Fox's party." He was dressed in black velvet, "buskins of

black cloth" covered his feet, flannel swathed his thighs, and there were thick gloves upon his hands.[1] It was one of those dramatic exhibitions which led his critics to call him a mountebank, and which nothing but his astonishing personal magnetism saved from absurdity. Suffering as he was from sickness and exhaustion, he spoke with indomitable pertinacity for over three hours, but much of his oration had to be delivered sitting; and on a day when, as Horace Walpole observed, thunder was wanted to blast the treaty, Pitt's voice flagged through weakness and robbed his words of their full beauty and power.

But he made clear his entire disapprobation of the Peace. He condemned unsparingly the fishery concessions to France, the exchange of Havannah for Florida, and the surrender of all our most valuable gains in the West Indies. It is characteristic of him and of his time that the ground of his condemnation was that we had failed to establish a commercial monopoly for England and to extinguish the trade of France. Great and generous as was his devotion to the empire, he yet believed fully in the ancient fallacy of the mercantile system, which held that only one of the two parties to a commercial exchange could be the gainer by it. Still his speech was full of statesmanlike insight. He

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George the Third* (1st ed.), i. 223, 224.

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discerned unerringly the new forces that were at work in Europe. Russia and Russian policy he described compactly as moving "in its own orbit extrinsically of all other systems, but gravitating to each according to the mass of attracting interest it contains." And he foretold the course of German consolidation when, in expatiating on the baseness of Bute's desertion of Frederick, he referred to the King of Prussia as "born to be the natural asserter of Germanic liberties against the House of Austria." [1]

Despite Pitt's efforts, the House approved the Peace by the substantial majority of 254. But the Ministry found that public opinion was far from ratifying this verdict; and the Cider Tax, which, according to tradition, was imposed by the incompetent Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Francis Dashwood, because it was the only one which he could understand, set even the Tory counties of the west aflame. At the height of the storm, Bute, whose unpopularity was seriously menacing the stability of the King's new party, resigned. With him Dashwood retired, in April 1763; and Fox, now become Lord Holland, departed from active politics with his peerage, and with as much pecuniary emolument as, after acrimonious haggling with his colleagues, he could manage to retain.

[1] Almon's *Anecdotes of Chatham*, i. 412, 413.

George Grenville then resumed the leadership of the House of Commons from which Fox had displaced him, and became First Lord of the Treasury. His post at the Admiralty was taken by Lord Sandwich, at once the ablest and most profligate figure in the great political connection of the Duke of Bedford. Bedford himself, who had held opposite views to Grenville on the subject of the Peace, did not join the Ministry. The two Secretaries of State were Lord Egremont, son of the Tory leader Sir William Wyndham, and inheriting from him much Tory influence, and Lord Halifax, who was to be chiefly conspicuous as the adversary of Wilkes.

Grenville had only been at the head of affairs for a fortnight when an event occurred which, ludicrously small in origin, grew through the obstinate stupidity of the King and his Ministers to the dimensions of a grave constitutional question. In 1762 had been founded the *North Briton*, "a most virulent weekly paper," which assailed Bute and the King's party with much dexterity and directness, and specially devoted itself to fanning the violent prejudice against the Scotch. It was produced by John Wilkes, at this time member for Aylesbury. Wilkes was the son of wealthy middle-class parents, and when quite a young man had contracted a marriage, which he himself called "a sacrifice to Plutus,

not to Venus," with a Methodist heiress. Her life was soon made so intolerable by the dissolute men of fashion whom Wilkes brought to dinner, that she left first his table and then his house; but Wilkes, having spent his own money and most of hers on the purchase of a seat in Parliament, still pursued her with attempts to get possession of her small remaining annuity, until the Courts warned him to desist. Then, when he had offered himself impartially for the posts of Governor of Canada and Ambassador at Constantinople, and failed to obtain either, he betook himself to the publication of the *North Briton*. Forty-four numbers had appeared before Bute resigned, and at the beginning of April, when his impending retirement became known, Wilkes for a time ceased publishing. But the King's speech proroguing Parliament on April 19 made it clear that the policy of the new Ministry was to be the same as that of the old; and on April 23 Wilkes issued the now historic "No. 45." In it he took his stand boldly on the received doctrine that the King's speech was really the speech of the Ministers. From this point of view he attacked them with great vigour and effect. He called the speech "the most abandoned instance of official effrontery ever attempted to be imposed on mankind," and inveighed against its attempt to gloss over the desertion of the King of Prussia.

With no suspicion of the long-continued struggle to which they were committing themselves, George III. and his Ministers resolved to crush Wilkes. They issued a general warrant, signed by the Secretary of State, commanding the arrest of "the authors, printers, and publishers" of the paper, but specifying no names. Under this, Wilkes and forty-eight other persons were brought before Lord Halifax. Acting with great coolness and spirit, Wilkes pleaded his privilege as a member of Parliament against arrest, and protested against a warrant containing no names as illegal. The Secretaries of State rejoined by committing him a close prisoner to the Tower. Far from quailing under this extraordinary treatment, he wrote a letter to his daughter, who was then at school in France, congratulating her on living in a free country, and sent it open to Lord Halifax. A writ of Habeas Corpus was obtained for him by his friends, and he was brought before Chief Justice Pratt in the Court of Common Pleas. Here he was victorious at all points. The Chief Justice ordered his release on the ground that the privilege of Parliament shielded members from arrest in all cases except treason, felony, and breach of the peace; and, in the actions that were brought by the arrested persons against those who had executed the warrant, he decided that warrants to search for and seize papers on a

charge of libel were illegal, and expressed the same opinion as to general warrants. A Guildhall jury awarded Wilkes £1000 damages against Wood, the Under-Secretary of State; and Halifax, against whom also Wilkes brought an action for illegal arrest, only escaped an adverse decision by employing legal technicalities to delay the proceedings. The King now descended on Wilkes and removed him from the colonelcy of the Buckinghamshire militia. Lord Temple, who had warmly supported Wilkes from the first, was obliged, as Lord-Lieutenant of the county, to inform him of the fact. He did so in a very complimentary letter, and was at once removed from his Lieutenancy and from the Privy Council.

Before the end of this turbulent summer the King had grown weary of his new Prime Minister. It was not that they disagreed about the Wilkes question; on the contrary, in this, as in all the other arbitrary proceedings of the Grenville administration, the King and his Ministers were in full accord. But George III. had already discovered that Grenville was possessed of a dictatorial obstinacy closely resembling his own, and that if he wanted, as he always did want, to govern in person, he must look for some more respectful agent. There is not a little irony in the fact that, on Bute's advice, he now decided to appeal to Pitt.

Pitt had, since his resignation in 1761, been

numbered with the Opposition, and had taken, as we have seen, as prominent a part as his ill-health would allow in denouncing the Peace of Paris. At the same time, though overtures had been made to him by Newcastle and the Duke of Cumberland for co-operation in a concerted plan of action, he had refused to commit himself to a definitive union with the great Whigs. It is probable that he was still somewhat dazzled with the magnificence of his own achievements as a War Minister, and was not attracted by the aspect which domestic politics were beginning to wear. It is certain that his cleavage with the main Whig connection at the close of his Ministry had left a deep impression on his mind, and intensified that distrust of party which, as will be more fully seen later, always impelled him to stand alone. At the same time he counted himself a Whig, he was far from ignoring the fact that the Whig families were still indispensable to the nation, and when Bute and the King approached him on this occasion he gave a convincing proof of his loyalty to Whig beliefs. On Friday, August 26, 1763, he received a message from the King requiring his attendance at noon next day at "the Queen's palace in the Park." Accordingly, on Saturday he "went at noonday through the Mall in his gouty chair, the boot of which (as he said

himself) makes it as much known as if his name was writ upon it." The King received him graciously, and they talked for three hours. Pitt laid stress on "the infirmities of the Peace" and the necessity of calling in the great Whig families. He was told to come again on Monday. On Sunday, "fully persuaded from the King's manner and behaviour that the thing would do," he visited Newcastle at Claremont and wrote to the other Whig leaders.[1] But on the same day Bute had met, at Kew, Elliot and Jenkinson, two typical hirelings of the Court party, and they terrified him so much with a lurid picture of the results that would ensue if the King called in Pitt, that Bute went back to his master and advised him to revert to Grenville.[2] Accordingly, on Sunday evening the King put himself once more in Grenville's hands, and assured him that he need not be afraid of any more machinations on the part of Bute. There still remained Pitt's interview of Monday. The King allowed this to be protracted to the length of two hours, and then, after Pitt had again pointed out that he could not take office without "the great families who have supported the Revolution government, and other great persons of whose abilities and integrity the public have had experience," he

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 236–238.

[2] *Grenville Papers*, ii. 197.

ended the conversation by the remark, "Well, Mr. Pitt, I see this won't do. My honour is concerned, and I must support it." [1] Before the end of the day further offers were made by Bute to Pitt, but these were refused. The conclusion of the whole matter was that, as the result of another characteristic piece of obliquity on the part of the King, the Bedfords were taken into the Ministry. Bedford, who knew nothing of the previous overtures to Pitt, had advised the King to send for the latter; but the King was careful in return to inform him that Pitt, who, for his part, knew nothing of Bedford's recommendation either, had animadverted strongly upon him and the other negotiators of the Peace. Filled with resentment against Pitt, Bedford brought his powerful faction to the support of Grenville, himself becoming President of the Council, and Sandwich Secretary of State.

The Ministry was no less resolved on the annihilation of Wilkes because of its reconstruction. When Parliament met again on November 15, the Government majority in the House of Commons condemned the offending number of the *North Briton* as a "false, scandalous, and seditious libel," while in the House of Lords Sandwich, himself a fellow-reveller of Wilkes in the notorious brotherhood of Medmenham, pro-

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 240, 241.

duced an indecent but unpublished parody of Pope which Wilkes had composed, entitled the *Essay on Woman*. The Peers without loss of time voted it blasphemous, and also a breach of privilege against Warburton, the latitudinarian Bishop of Gloucester, who, having found that some burlesque notes appended to the poem had been maliciously attributed to his name by Wilkes, "foamed with the violence of a St. Dominic" in the debate, and said that the blackest fiends in hell would not keep company with his traducer.[1] Nor was this all. The next day, Martin, an ex-Secretary of the Treasury, who had been practising with the pistol all the summer, revived an old insult which he had received from Wilkes, challenged him to a duel in the Park, and left him a few hours later dangerously wounded on the field.

Pitt keenly resented the extravagant illegalities in the proceedings against Wilkes. "Why do not they search the Bishop of Gloucester's study of heresy?" he exclaimed indignantly when he heard of the debate in the Lords on the *Essay on Woman*. When the question of Wilkes' Parliamentary privilege was raised on November 23, obviously with a retrospective and vindictive purpose, he spoke strongly against its surrender. "No man could condemn the

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George the Third*, i. 312.

North Briton more than he did; but he would come at the author fairly, not by an open breach of the Constitution and a contempt of all restraint." Pitt had no sympathy with the mob-worship which Wilkes was beginning to receive, and detested both his character and his virulent journalism. At the same time he firmly maintained the question of constitutional principle. The House of Commons, he said, had no business to vote away the inherent rights of future members; and in the debates on the legality of general warrants which followed he spoke his mind still more freely, protesting against the sacrifice by Parliament of its own privileges and its abandonment of the liberty of the subject. These declarations foreshadowed his greater deliverances on the subject in 1770. For a time the case of Wilkes disappears from the scene. Important as were the questions which it had raised, they were small in comparison with the transcendent issues involved in the proposal to tax America, which was now by the unwisdom of George Grenville brought within the sphere of practical politics.

CHAPTER VI

THE TAXATION OF AMERICA

England's colonial policy—Its effect upon America—Grenville's attitude—The Stamp Act—Pitt in retirement—Sir W. Pynsent's legacy—Pitt at Burton Pynsent—Again approached to form a Cabinet—Pitt and Temple—The Rockingham Ministry—America's reception of the Stamp Act—Pitt and the Rockinghams—His views on party—First speeches on America—Repeal of the Stamp Act.

THE British conquest of Canada had brought about a change in the relations between the American colonies and the mother country which was vast, even if its full significance was not yet realised. It had removed the incubus of French aggression, and opened to the colonists the possibility of unchecked expansion from sea to sea. In so doing it had removed also their chief need of British succour, and henceforward, whatever tie of political union still remained, they were no longer dependent on England for actual existence. Separation thus became feasible, but,

though foreign observers confidently predicted it, it was as yet only a dream, and in no sense represented the desires of the American people.

The true cause of the final rupture lay in the old colonial system, which looked upon the colonies as simply so many tributary estates. British policy had been ever since the Navigation Act of 1660, as Burke said, purely commercial, and to be commercial it had, according to the spirit of the age, been restrictive. Like all other European countries in the eighteenth century, England was a monopolist in the matter of colonial trade. Thus in the case of America the development of all industries which could compete with English manufactures—from iron and steel products to woollen goods and hats—was barred by legal enactment. The exchange of American timber for the sugar and molasses of the French West Indies was prohibited in order to preserve the sugar monopoly of the English West Indies, which themselves could only afford a very inadequate market for the Americans. Very many American articles might only be exported to the home market in England, and no Continental articles might be imported by the colonists unless they had first been landed and paid duty in England. Such was the spirit of British monopoly, but America was not without her consolations. She had bounties on the importa-

tion into England of her ship-timber, her pitch and tar; by exemption from duties on certain articles she herself monopolised the British market in respect of these; the grievance with regard to Continental goods was alleviated by means of drawbacks; and in practice the restraint on her commerce with the French West Indies was virtually evaded.

This was America's commercial lot; she bore it because she had known no other, and because it was in accordance with the universal custom of the time. It had not prevented her from attaining prosperity; but all practicable mitigation, and all possible indifference on the part of British statesmen to her contraband trade, were needed to make it tolerable. Such indifference English Ministers had characteristically seldom failed to show. But, clearly, the greater America grew the more unbearable would commercial restriction become, and a conflict was inevitable if fresh irritating impositions should be superadded to those already existing. For this there had now arrived both the hour and the man. England had emerged from the Seven Years' War an empire, but an empire burdened with a great debt; and she had before her the difficult task, not only of organising efficient Imperial defence but of economising its expenses. The Minister in control of her affairs at this supremely import-

ant moment was George Grenville. Of all men he was the least likely to make graceful concessions, the most resolute to stand on the strict letter of the law. On the present occasion his very merits contained elements of danger; but for his strong sense of duty and his legal abilities, his want of political prescience would have been less fatal. Having found that the customs revenue actually derived from America was costing four times its own value in collection, and that the commercial regulations were freely infringed by the colonists, he revived the strict enforcement of the trade laws, and made it part of the duty of all naval officers stationed off the American coasts to act as revenue officials and repress smuggling. At the same time he determined to maintain a permanent army in America, and by Parliamentary taxation to make the colonies contribute towards its maintenance. This was the origin of the ill-omened Stamp Act. In March 1764 Grenville introduced and carried a motion to the effect that "for further defraying the expense of protecting the colonies it may be proper to charge certain stamp duties in the said colonies." Then for a year the matter was suspended, so that the colonists might have time to consider it and suggest any other method of raising the money which seemed preferable to them. The traditional mode of contribution was by separate grants

on the part of the colonial assemblies in response to a requisition from the Crown, and Benjamin Franklin urged Grenville to resort to it again. Franklin had, however, to admit, when pressed by the Minister, that the colonies would never agree on the proportionate sum which each should raise.

This was the last diplomatic effort on the part of the colonial agents in England; the colonial assemblies in America were wholly recalcitrant. In February 1765 Grenville brought in the Bill, which was received in a scanty House with very languid interest, and passed almost without opposition. It provided that all business agreements, legal documents, and newspapers should be issued upon stamped paper only, which was to be sold by public distributors at fixed rates. The revenue resulting was to be paid into the Treasury and applied solely to the maintenance of colonial defence. The Admiralty Courts were to adjudicate on offenders under the Act, which was to come into operation on November 1.

While Parliament was unconsciously voting away its colonies, and the colonies themselves were fermenting with alarm, Pitt was buried in seclusion. For long he was laid up with gout at Hayes. The contrast between his present deep retirement and his recent splendid Ministry struck the imagination; the people waited for his return to office in order to yield him a ready allegiance,

and some admirers, following the example of the old Duchess of Marlborough twenty years before, gave substantial form to their esteem. Mr. Allen of Prior Park, near Bath, left him a legacy of £1000 in 1764, and in 1765 he received a strange and unexpected bequest on the death of an aged Somersetshire baronet. Sir William Pynsent had abandoned politics and the town when the Tory party rose to power in the last years of Queen Anne, and in the Treaty of Paris he now seemed to see a peace not less ignominious than that of Utrecht, and a second Marlborough in its victim, Pitt. To Pitt accordingly he left his estate of Burton Pynsent, which was worth some £3000 a year.

Round Burton Pynsent centred henceforward much of Pitt's private life. He was never so happy as when in country scenes, and certainly never so well as when he spent his days scouring the hills with his children, following them, "*longo sed proximus intervallo*, after a hare," or led on by "the all-exploring eye of taste," and coming home in the evening to supper with, as he said, a farmer's appetite. He shared the fashionable passion for landscape-gardening, in which Bishop Warburton pronounced his taste inimitable, and at Burton Pynsent he could indulge it to the full. Here too he gathered memorials of the kind he loved to treasure. He hung the ballroom of Burton Pynsent with full-length portraits of the

Marquis of Granby, Admiral Boscawen, and Admiral Saunders, to recall the service they had rendered in the hour of England's glory and his own, when, in Cowper's words—

". . . . It was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children; praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own."[1]

In the spring of 1765 Pitt was again approached to form a Ministry. The cause was not the administrative errors of the Government, but the King's impatience under the ever-tightening hand of Grenville. The insult inflicted by the Ministers on his mother, the Princess Dowager, whose name they excluded from the list of possible Regents in the Bill which was brought forward after his first illness, goaded him to distraction. He turned to the uncle whom he had before treated so badly, the Duke of Cumberland, and empowered him to negotiate with Pitt. Both Lord Albemarle and the Duke were sent to see him. To them Pitt unfolded his policy, which embraced a counter-alliance against the Bourbons abroad and the reversal of unconstitutional measures at home. He does not seem to

[1] For Chatham at Burton Pynsent cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 469, 470; iv. 183–185, 231, 232, 267–269.

have been at all reluctant to take office. But the situation was greatly complicated by the fact that Lord Temple had just effected a reconciliation with his brother George Grenville, and aspired to form a Ministry based on the family triumvirate of himself, Grenville, and their brother-in-law Pitt. If Temple had stood alone these designs would not have mattered, but his close union with Pitt gave them grave importance.

Behind Pitt the baleful star of Temple is generally visible, and never did it exercise a more fatal attraction than in the spring and summer of 1765. Through Temple's influence Pitt now declined to move. George III. had once more to submit to Grenville and Bedford, and King and Ministers treated each other with relentless rudeness. So intolerable was the position that the King a second time appealed to Pitt. Once more Temple refused to take office with him. "This declaration of Lord Temple's," wrote the Duke of Cumberland to Albemarle on June 26, "prevents Pitt from taking a share, which indeed most thoroughly and most heartily he had done. . . . By what I can pick up, Pitt is completely mortified, and I am heartily sorry for it, as he had entered more sincerely and cordially into the King's service, nay, and went further almost than the King's views." [1]

[1] *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 213, 214.

Nevertheless, it was the Whigs, though the Whigs without Pitt and Temple, who eventually set the King free from Grenville. Their main connection took office under the Marquis of Rockingham, who had Conway and the Duke of Grafton as his Secretaries of State, while the old Duke of Newcastle was included in the Ministry as Privy Seal. As an administration it was far from strong, though the lustrous eloquence of Burke, whom it brought into politics, has cast a halo round its mediocrity. Rockingham was a timid and embarrassed speaker; Conway, who led the House of Commons, was a gallant soldier but no statesman; Grafton, though a man of promise, cared more for sport than politics, and was really a follower not of Rockingham but of Pitt. Further, the Ministry contained an alien element in the young and brilliant Charles Townshend, who, though Paymaster, spoke of the Cabinet with disdain; and in Lord Chancellor Northington and Lord Barrington, Secretary for War, who were both sworn followers of the King. Yet, morally, the Rockingham Whigs themselves stood head and shoulders above preceding Ministries. They not only professed but practised political integrity, and, short as was their tenure of office, and stubbornly as they were thwarted by the King, they succeeded in carrying most sorely needed measures.

The great problem before the new Ministers, unconscious of it as, when they took office, they seem to have been, was the American question. The tidings of the passing of the Stamp Act set the colonies ablaze, and that union which Indian war and French menaces had been unable to inspire was automatically produced by the imminence of this common danger. Nine States sent representatives to a congress at New York in October 1765, and in petitions to the King and Parliament and a Declaration of Right they set forth the case for America. It was, they held, "inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them but with their own consent, given personally or by their representatives." They themselves, however, were not, and by the nature of circumstances never could be, represented in the House of Commons, and it followed, therefore, that the British Parliament could not tax them. Besides these calm constitutional protests there were violent disturbances, which forced the hand of the moderate party. There was rioting at Boston and much burning of effigies, and, more seriously, the burning of Chief Justice Hutchinson's house. Stamp distributors were terrorised out of their posts, and the stamps themselves were not allowed to circulate. To put an end to the entire block in public business

which resulted, the Governors were obliged to authorise non-compliance with the Act. The American merchants also took retaliatory steps which touched England more nearly. They boycotted British goods and repudiated their debts to British merchants while the obnoxious Act remained in force. This course of action had the effect of converting the whole trading community of Great Britain to a belief in the necessity for its repeal.

The effectiveness of the Ministry in dealing with the American question mainly depended on Pitt's attitude towards them. Without him any fabric of reform that they might raise would be built upon the sand. If he joined them he would bring with him the enthusiastic support of the people, and, led by his genius and backed by a united public opinion, they might hold down the forces of coercion and prerogative. In the light that we now possess of the policy of George the Third it is impossible to resist Burke's conclusion that the supreme need of the time was a stable and cohesive party. Nothing else could combat successfully the systematic corruption practised by the Court, or put an end to the aimless disunion and selfish apathy among the chief political groups which made that corruption possible. Pitt was offered a unique chance of consolidating such a party. It was unique,

because the body of statesmen which now invited him to join them was the only one which could point to a record of untarnished honour. But he gave no sign, and deliberately drew back from the opportunity. The new Ministers consulted him repeatedly and conciliated him by distinguishing his friends. It was again and again made clear to him that if he was willing to lead he had only to place himself at their head. His only response was to write letter after letter to his friends during the last half of 1765 expressing a rooted distrust of Newcastle, and at most to send to Grafton "the best wishes of a Somersetshire bystander."[1]

Mere physical causes had no doubt something to do with this strange reluctance. Incessant fits of gout, operating on a highly strung and excitable temperament, had produced the beginning of that extreme nervous tension which in 1767 developed into complete prostration. His naturally indocile temper became almost impracticable. Illness had impaired his grasp of realities, for the image of the pervading influence of Newcastle which he conjured up was the phantom of a distorted brain. At the same time we cannot say with any certainty that if his brain had been unclouded he would have acted differently. For his attitude was quite consistent

[1] Anson's *Grafton*, p. 59.

with his peculiar views on party. It is abundantly clear from his correspondence, that, so far from desiring to act always in concert with any particular set of politicians, he preferred to stand alone, or, at most, to draw support from all quarters without much regard for the homogeneousness of his following. For party, as such, he never professed to care. There was thus a strong superficial resemblance between his own methods and those of George the Third, but Pitt's ideal was very different to the King's. He desired a union of ability in the service of the country, without respect of persons. It is an ideal with which nowadays we can ourselves sympathise, for, though Ministries of all the talents have not been among the most successful in history, it takes a hearty conservatism to admit that the party system represents the final and completed effort of political development. More than one cause had probably contributed so to shape Pitt's views. In his War Ministry he had united several varieties and shades of opinion in the support of his policy, and he himself acknowledged the loyal help which the Tories had given him. For the great family connections, which, though supposed to form the nucleus of the Whigs, were generally oscillating to and fro in pursuit of patronage and public money, he felt a growing disdain. It may be urged that the

Whigs proper were at this time reduced to the blameless circle of the Rockinghams, and that the party which Pitt was asked to reconstruct was thus free from the features of Whiggism which he most disliked. That even under these circumstances he forbore to join it, shows that his distaste for party was all-embracing.

But, though he stood thus persistently alone, his utterances on the Peace of Paris had not been more eagerly awaited than was his first pronouncement upon America. He was at the parting of the ways. No definite decision had been taken; Rockingham, with Grafton and Conway, preferred the repeal of the Stamp Act, but the King, the Court party, and its adherents within the Rockingham Cabinet, threw their weight on the other side. George Grenville was committed to the enforcement of his own Act, and of course denounced repeal. The debates of December 1765 had done little to clear up matters.

When Parliament met after the Christmas recess on January 14, 1766, Pitt was in his place. There followed one of the historic debates of the House of Commons, and one for which America was listening not less anxiously than England. Pitt delivered two great speeches in the course of it, and they show his mastery of lucid argument, and still more the height of inspiration to which he was capable of rising in

reply. He began his first speech by emphasising the fact that he stood there "single and unconnected." He denounced the late Ministry, saying that every capital measure they had taken was wrong. He discomfited the Rockinghams with a characteristic expression of want of confidence, which was all the more embarrassing because it was couched in strains of eulogy. Their characters were fair, he said, and he was always glad when men of fair character engaged in the King's service. "They will do me the justice to own I advised them to engage; but, notwithstanding—I love to be explicit—I cannot give them my confidence: pardon me, gentlemen, confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom; youth is the season of credulity."

Then, discarding personalities, he plunged into the heart of the American question :—

"When the resolution was taken in the House to tax America, I was ill in bed. If I could have endured to have been carried in my bed, so great was the agitation of my mind for the consequences, I would have solicited some kind hand to have laid me down on this floor, to have borne my testimony against it. It is now an Act that has passed. I would speak with decency of every Act of this House, but I must beg the indulgence of the House to speak of it with freedom. I hope a day may soon be appointed

to consider the state of the nation with respect to America. I hope gentlemen will come to this debate with all the temper and impartiality that his Majesty recommends and the importance of the subject requires—a subject of greater importance than ever engaged the attention of the House, that subject only excepted when nearly a century ago it was a question whether you yourselves were to be bond or free. ..... I will only speak to one point—a point which seems not to have been generally understood; I mean, to the right. . . . It is my opinion that this kingdom has no right to lay a tax upon the colonies. At the same time I assert the authority of this kingdom over the colonies to be sovereign and supreme in every circumstance of government and legislation whatever. Taxation is no part of the governing or legislative power. The taxes are a voluntary gift and grant of the Commons alone..... The idea of a virtual representation of America in this House is the most contemptible that ever entered into the head of a man. It does not deserve a serious refutation. The Commons of America, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of the exercise of this their constitutional right, of giving and granting their own money. They would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed it. . . . I never shall own the justice of taxing

America internally until she enjoys the right of representation. In every other point of legislation the authority of Parliament is like the north star, fixed for the reciprocal benefit of the parent country and her colonies."

Pitt thus took his stand firmly on the indissoluble connection between taxation and representation. Grenville in his reply asserted that the right of taxation was included in the sovereign Power, and that Parliament, as sovereign, could therefore tax the colonies. Legally his position was irrefragable, and doubtless Pitt was unwise in attempting to rest his case so much as he did upon considerations of constitutional law, though in his justification it must be remembered that the chief judicial authority on his side, Lord Camden, indulged in even more unrestrained language against the validity of Grenville's view. But there was a broad ground of policy in Pitt's utterances which Grenville never seriously touched. Grenville moved in a world of formulas and abstractions, and, having discovered that it was not absolutely unconstitutional to tax the colonies, resolved to enforce his decision at all costs. Pitt looked at the concrete case. He discerned that the spirit which animated American resistance was one with the principle which throughout English history had prompted the most famous

vindications of popular right against prerogative, and he saw that coercion would be disastrous and impossible, and that nothing less than the unity of the empire was at stake. This is brought out more fully in his reply. Rising a second time, with characteristic disregard of Parliamentary conventions, to answer Grenville, he poured forth a torrent of eloquence which decided the immediate question of repeal and left an ineffaceable impression on America.

"The gentleman tells us America is obstinate, America is almost in open rebellion. I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest. I come not here armed at all points with law cases and Acts of Parliament; with the Statute Book doubled down in dogs' ears, to defend the cause of liberty. . . . If the gentleman does not understand the difference between internal and external taxes, I cannot help it. But there is a plain distinction between taxes levied for the purpose of raising a revenue, and duties imposed for the regulation of trade for the accommodation of the subject; although in the consequences some revenue might accidentally arise from the latter. The gentleman asks, When were the colonies emancipated? I desire to know when they were

made slaves. But I dwell not upon words. When I had the honour of serving his Majesty, I availed myself of the means of information which I derived from my office; I speak, therefore, from knowledge. My materials were good; I was at pains to collect, to digest, to consider them; and I will be bold to affirm that the profit to Great Britain from the trade of the colonies is two millions a year. This is the fund that carried you triumphantly through the last war. And shall a miserable financier come with a boast that he can bring a peppercorn into the exchequer, to the loss of millions to the nation? I dare not say how much higher these profits may be augmented. Omitting the immense increase of people by natural population in the northern colonies and the migration from every part of Europe, I am convinced the whole commercial system may be altered to advantage. A great deal has been said, without doors, of the strength of America. It is a topic that ought to be cautiously meddled with. In a good cause, on a sound bottom, the force of this country can crush America to atoms. But on this ground, on the Stamp Act, when so many here will think it a crying injustice, I am one who will lift up my hands against it. In such a cause your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man. She would embrace

the pillars of the State, and pull down the Constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace? Not to sheathe the sword in its scabbard, but to sheathe it in the bowels of your countrymen? The Americans have not acted in all things with prudence and temper. They have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness you have occasioned? Rather let prudence and temper come first from this side. I will undertake for America that she will follow the example.

> 'Be to her faults a little blind,
> Be to her virtues very kind.'

Upon the whole, I will beg leave to tell the House what is really my opinion. It is that the Stamp Act be repealed absolutely, totally, and immediately; that the reason for the repeal be assigned, because it was founded on an erroneous principle. At the same time let the sovereign authority of this country over the colonies be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised, and be made to extend to every point of legislation whatever; that we may bind their trade, confine their manufactures, and exercise every power whatsoever, except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their own consent." [1]

Repeal was henceforth assured, but it was not

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 363–372.

carried without long and embittered debates, in which the influence of the Court was turned unsparingly against the Ministers. The King's Friends openly opposed it, and the King himself ignored Rockingham's remonstrances against their conduct. At last Lord Strange circulated a rumour that repeal was contrary to his Majesty's wishes, whereupon Rockingham went straight to George the Third, and elicited from him a denial. Curious memorials of this survived in the shape of three disavowals in the King's handwriting, in the last of which, a mere scrap of paper, and seemingly part of the cover of a letter, he declares that, though he would have preferred modification, he was for repeal as against coercion. It was impossible for the Ministers, in view of their own weakness and the contemptuous disregard which had been shown by the Americans for the late Acts, to carry repeal without the addition of a qualifying measure. Accordingly, it was accompanied by a Declaratory Act affirming the right of Parliament to make laws binding on the colonies in all cases, without exception. But across the sea this implied menace was held as nothing beside the immediate boon of repeal, which for a time most truly pacified the people of America.

CHAPTER VII

PEERAGE, MINISTRY, AND RETIREMENT

Fall of the Rockinghams—Pitt induced to take office—Composition of his Ministry—He becomes Earl of Chatham—His foreign policy—His Indian policy—His tactical errors as a party leader—The visit to Bath and return—Townshend's insubordination—Mental eclipse of Chatham—His mysterious malady—Grafton visits him at Hampstead—Chatham sinks back into seclusion.

PITT'S American speeches had once more shown how indispensable was his adhesion to the Rockingham Ministry if that Ministry was to stand. They had shown, as the Prime Minister said in a letter which he wrote to the King the day after the great debate, "the amazing powers and influence" of Pitt whenever he chose to intervene.[1] Overtures to him were again made, but again ended in failure, as they were bound to end; for the two principal parties were at cross purposes, Rockingham wishing to remain titular leader, or at most to divide supremacy with Pitt, and Pitt pronouncing for

[1] *Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 270.

THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM

"a transposition of offices" to the detriment of Rockingham.[1] In February, however, Rockingham was prepared to place himself in Pitt's hands. But Pitt, who was chagrined by the failure of the earlier negotiations, declared himself obdurate to all but the express command of the King; and two months later Rockingham himself became more sanguine as to the maintenance of his Ministry, and again moved away from Pitt. Yet in fact he was on the brink of his fall. In May, Grafton resigned, carrying himself over avowedly to the camp of Pitt, where in spirit he had always been. In July the Chancellor, Lord Northington, who as a King's Friend had been a focus of disaffection within the Cabinet, finally broke away, and, this done, George the Third promptly dismissed his Ministers.

He then turned to Pitt, very much as he had done in 1763. But he was now far more insidious and more dangerous. In 1763 he had not matured his policy, and sought mainly an escape from Grenville; now he had set his system in full and successful operation, and in Pitt he discerned an unconscious instrument. Skilfully and fatally did he work on the apparent coincidence between Pitt's maxim of "measures, not men," and his own design of "routing out the present system of parties banding together."

[1] Anson's *Grafton*, p. 67.

Pitt's course of action at this juncture does more credit to his heart than to his head. It is astonishing that he should have allowed his regard for the King to blind him to the inherent and disastrous flaws of the administration he was called upon to form. But it was one of his weaknesses to be dazzled by the attributes of Royalty. How deep was his dejection under the "irremovable Royal displeasure" of George the Second in 1754 we have already seen. Whig as he was, no believer in the divine right of kings in Stuart days venerated more devoutly than he "the deputy elected by the Lord." While his language to his colleagues was pronounced by Conway to be of an autocratic kind seldom heard west of Constantinople, he approached his sovereign in a spirit of abasement that was similarly Oriental. It was part of the florid and fantastic element in his character, akin to the pomp and circumstance and mystery with which he surrounded himself in his journey through the world.

The miscellaneous nature of his new Cabinet can only be appreciated by examining its component parts in detail. It contained a solid substratum of King's Friends. Northington became Lord President. Barrington remained Secretary for War. Lord North, now coming forward into ill-starred prominence, was Joint

Paymaster of the Forces. Charles Townshend, whose American policy was diametrically opposed to Pitt's, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the same time Pitt took from the Rockingham party Conway, who resumed his former office of Secretary of State, and Grafton, who became First Lord of the Treasury. For his Chancellor he had Lord Camden, who, as Chief Justice Pratt, had decided in the Wilkes case in favour of popular right, and was one of the chief advocates of a liberal policy towards America. He attracted also the clever but inscrutable Shelburne, and his follower Barré, who, after signalising his entry into public life by stormy declamations against Pitt, had found salvation when the clamour over Wilkes arose. Only one figure was lacking which could possibly have made the Ministry more dissonant, and that was Temple. His self-importance now received a chastisement that was only unfortunate because it came so late. Pitt offered him the Treasury, but Temple would be content with nothing less than an absolute equality with Pitt in allotting the various posts in the Cabinet. This, Pitt had the firmness to decline, whereupon Temple's injured vanity exploded in inspired pamphlets and sarcastic private letters that commented indignantly on "the proposition of being stuck into a Ministry as a great cipher at the head of the Treasury, sur-

rounded by other ciphers, all named by Mr. Pitt, of different complexion with me." [1]

So diverse was the composition of the Ministry, which Burke has described in a famous passage as "such a tesselated pavement without cement —here a bit of black stone and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers, King's Friends and republicans, Whigs and Tories, treacherous friends and open enemies—that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on." [2] Pitt in his prime might possibly have managed to hold it together through his ascendency in the House of Commons. But its last chance of cohesion vanished when, at the very outset, he took the momentous decision to withdraw to the House of Lords with the Earldom of Chatham and the post of Privy Seal. The reasons for this step were obvious and simple. With health grievously impaired and nerves so shattered that the strain of business became to him daily more intolerable, he could neither have led the Commons nor taken over the charge of a laborious department. But to his whole Cabinet, from Northington to Camden, the tidings came as a startling shock. They realised more fully than he himself did how far his position in the country depended upon his remaining the Great

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 468, 469.

[2] Speech on American Taxation, April 19, 1774.

Commoner, unique and impeccable, the chosen representative of the people. Horace Walpole had predicted truly that the circumstances both of the time and of the Ministry would be against Pitt; that he wanted the thorough bass of drums and trumpets, and was not made for peace. These disadvantages were crowned by his acceptance of a peerage. The people fell away from him. The countermanding by the City of London of the illuminations which had been prepared to celebrate his return to office was an infallible, if somewhat ludicrous, sign of the revocation of popular favour. His enemies compared him to Pulteney, and his best friends felt that, however unfair the parallel, there was an ominous similarity in the attitude of the public on the two occasions.

Thus in July 1766 stood Chatham, to give him the title by which he must henceforth be called, and by which he has been generally known in history, in distinction from his statesman son. Under such circumstances, with fear and fainting of hearts inside the Cabinet and the withdrawal of popular support outside, with his own vigour failing and the cloud darkening over his brain, he could at most only adumbrate a policy. What little he could do he did, and it is interesting to trace his activity, brief as it was, in various fields of statesmanship.

First he turned to his old and chosen sphere of

foreign affairs. He had been watching with attention and alarm the busy diplomacy of Choiseul, and he now projected a "northern system" to counterbalance the Family Compact. It was to be a triple alliance of England, Prussia, and Russia, with provisions for taking in the smaller Powers of north Europe if they were willing to join. Chatham was always fascinated by schemes of this kind, partly from his natural taste and ability for planning great measures of high policy, partly because he had ever vividly present before his eyes the menace of Bourbon aggression. To this menace he conceived a northern alliance to be the natural counterpoise; it was, as we have seen, one of the chief items in the programme which he put forward when approached by Cumberland in the Cabinet crisis of 1765. The astute diplomatist Hans Stanley, who had been Chatham's emissary to Paris in 1761, was selected to negotiate at St. Petersburg and to sound Frederick upon his way. In a letter which he wrote to Chatham in August Stanley surveyed the chances of his mission. Russia, he thought, felt secure and independent owing to her distance from the southern Powers, and there were no indications that she particularly wanted to bind herself to England. Prussia desired a dual and exclusive alliance with Russia. The sole hope of success lay in the possibility of

persuading Frederick that it would be to his interest to admit England to the compact. Frederick, however, when he was approached, proved recalcitrant. He spoke in general terms to Mitchell, the British Ambassador at Berlin, of his distaste for complicated unions in time of peace. "When the storm seems to be rising, and clouds begin to appear, then, and not till then, is the time of uniting together and of concerting measures to ward off the impending danger." Probably the chief reason for his refusal was that he had neither forgotten nor forgiven England's treatment of him at the Peace of Paris. For Chatham he expressed, now as always, great admiration and regard; but his confidence in the continuity of British policy had been shaken by the short-lived and oscillating Ministries that had succeeded each other since George III. came to the throne. He did not believe in the durability of Chatham's influence. When Mitchell reminded him that his great ally was again in power and would so continue, Frederick replied, "That does not agree with my accounts from England."[1] Prussia thus proved impracticable, and Russia was not less perverse. As Stanley had predicted, and Chatham himself had foreseen when he said in his speech on the Peace that Russia's true

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 140.

interests led her to move "extrinsically of other systems," she would only consent to an alliance on terms entangling to the Western Power. She declared that the treaty must embrace the eventuality of a Turkish war, and, as this was not a matter in which England could feel any interest, the negotiations dropped altogether.

Another great question, closely touching those Imperial interests which Chatham held so dear, was now crying for settlement. Since the victories of Clive, Bengal had been devastated by scandalous misgovernment. The English power was supreme and undisputed, though nominally native rulers still held sway. The officials of the Company utilised this power to establish trade monopolies and levy blackmail; and while they amassed huge fortunes native industry succumbed. Sometimes the people of Bengal, in Macaulay's words, "submitted in patient misery. Sometimes they fled from the white man, as their fathers had been used to fly from the Mahratta; and the palanquin of the English traveller was often carried through silent villages and towns, which the report of his approach had made desolate."[1] The results were seen in England in the return of the "nabobs," who had begun, as Chatham said in 1770, to buy themselves into Parliament with such a

[1] Essay on Clive.

torrent of corruption as no private hereditary fortune could resist. In 1765 Clive went back to India invested with great powers in response to a universal call. Confronted by the bitterest opposition from his subordinates, he organised and carried through with wonderful firmness far-reaching measures of reform; but when his short administration of eighteen months was ended the Company failed to maintain his policy, and the fundamental question of the relative right of the Crown and the Company to the sovereignty of the Indian territories came forward in substantial shape.

"I need not tell you," wrote Chatham to Townshend in January 1767, "how entirely this transcendent object, India, possesses my heart and fixes my thoughts."[1] The fullest statement of his views on Indian policy is to be found in letters which he wrote to Shelburne, who himself shared his opinions, when the question of India was revived in Parliament in 1773. "I always conceived," he said then, "that there is in substantial justice a mixed right to the territorial revenues between the State and the Company, as joint captors; the State equitably entitled to the larger share, as largest contributor in the acquisition by fleets and men, etc. Nor can the Company's share, when ascertained, be considered

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 153.

as private property, but in trust for the public purposes of defence of India and the extension of trade, never in any case to be portioned out in dividends to the extinction of the spirit of trade."[1] His conviction that the ultimate right to, and responsibility for, the Indian territories lay with the Crown, and that the Company must be regarded as essentially a trustee, was characteristic of a statesman who always emphasised the moral obligations of Government. He asserted it just as emphatically in 1766–1767 as in 1773. In November 1766 he secured the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the affairs of the Company. But illness prostrated him before he could develop the lines of his policy, and he was not destined himself to inaugurate Indian reform. For his attitude towards the schemes eventually adopted we must have recourse to another of the letters written to Shelburne in the summer of 1773, in which his statesmanlike ideas found large and liberal expression. "India," he wrote, "teems with iniquities so rank as to smell to earth and heaven. The reformation of them, if pursued in a pure spirit of justice, might exalt the nation, and endear the English name throughout the world. . . . The putting under circumscription and control the high and dangerous prerogative of

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 264.

war and alliances, so abused in India, I cannot but approve. . . . The abolition of inland trade on private account is highly laudable, as far as that provision goes; but I would assuredly carry the prohibition further, and open again to the natives and other Eastern merchants the inland trade of Bengal, and abolish all monopolies on the Company's account, which now operate to the unjust exclusion of an oppressed people, and to the impoverishing and alienating of those extensive and populous provinces. The hearts and good affections of Bengal are of more worth than all the profits of ruinous and odious monopolies." [1]

A suggestion of Chatham's preoccupation with India at the opening of his Ministry is given in an amusing letter written by Wedderburn the lawyer to George Grenville in September 1766. Wedderburn pictures Chatham as surveying the kingdoms of the earth from "the pinnacle of Hampstead Hill," himself invisible; though how he intends to dispose of them passes conjecture. "Fame says, indeed, that he has begun at one extremity of the world, and that

> 'Hydaspes, Indus, and the Ganges,
> Dread from his arm impending changes.'" [2]

To Hampstead Chatham had fled when he was forming his Ministry in the hot days of July, and

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 276, 277.

[2] *Grenville Papers*, iii. 320.

it is closely, if inauspiciously, connected with this epoch in his life.

From India, however, his attention was speedily distracted by less important but more irritating and immediate concerns. A bad harvest had been followed by extreme scarcity, by rioting and great distress; and to secure the food supply, and prevent a further rise in prices, the Ministry by an Order in Council laid an embargo on the export of corn. Having exceeded the letter of the law, they had to apply to Parliament for indemnification. In the debates which followed, Camden, in the House of Lords, let fall the unlucky observation that the measure was at worst only a forty days' tyranny, while in the House of Commons Chatham's henchman Beckford, "the wild alderman" as Temple called him, made a mysterious and extraordinarily injudicious allusion to the dispensing power. These indiscretions furnished a telling opportunity of which Mansfield and Grenville made full use in reply, and thus the Government was handicapped from the start.

Still more vexatious to Chatham was the miscarriage of his party diplomacy. In the early autumn of 1766 negotiations were opened with the Bedford interest in the view of strengthening the Ministry. Chatham, true to his cherished principle, seems to have thought it both advisable

and possible to detach a single member from that well-disciplined connection, and he contented himself with offering a post to Lord Gower. This was not enough for the Bedfords, and it was declined. In October, however, Chatham met the Duke at Bath, and they had frequent conferences together. This made an impression on the political world, but neither now nor later, when Chatham returned to town, did it issue in an alliance. The final result was indeed just the opposite, as Bedford's failure to obtain what he wanted parted him decisively from Chatham, and linked him closely with the other groups in opposition. These circumstances made it absolutely imperative that the Ministry should be itself at one and able to show an undivided front to its foes.

But at this critical time it was rent asunder by a piece of discourtesy on the part of Chatham, for which he paid most dearly. Wishing to dispose of the Treasurership of the Household in another quarter, he brusquely invited Lord Edgcumbe, who held it, to exchange it for a Lordship of the Bedchamber. Edgcumbe was unwilling; but the Earl of Bessborough, who was at the Post Office, to arrange the difficulty offered to take the Lordship of the Bedchamber, and to surrender his own post to Edgcumbe. Chatham, however, trampled mercilessly on the feelings of these

illustrious Whigs. He dismissed Edgcumbe and summarily vetoed Bessborough's proposal. With Edgcumbe departed the patronage of four boroughs, but there was also a more serious defection. The most eminent and unimpeachably Whig section of the Ministry—the Duke of Portland, Lord Bessborough, Lord Scarborough, Lord Monson, Sir Charles Saunders, Sir W. Meredith, and Admiral Keppel—resigned in a body. Conway, who was hardly to be persuaded not to resign himself, wrote to Chatham that he was "much distressed and hurt" by what had taken place.[1]

The only distinguished name among the substitutes whom Chatham found to fill these gaps was that of Sir Edward Hawke, who took the Admiralty. The outlook of the Ministry had never been more dark. Chatham himself had already given signs of growing fallibility of judgment, not only in the case of Edgcumbe, but in tactics more purely political, as when, for example, he entrusted the motion for an Indian inquiry to the windy Beckford. Further, his ardent eloquence was chilled in the uncongenial atmosphere of the House of Lords, where the Duke of Richmond, confronting the great statesman with a boldness that had only been paralleled in the House of Commons by Barré's celebrated

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 128.

attack, said he hoped the nobility would not be browbeaten by an insolent Minister. But in the Cabinet Chatham seems, as long as he was able to be present at its deliberations, to have preserved intact his remarkable ascendency. The most brilliant and most wayward of his colleagues was Townshend; yet Townshend confessed to Grafton, as they drove home together after a Cabinet Council over which Chatham had presided, "that the Earl had just shown them what inferior animals they were."[1]

The master hand was now to be withdrawn. On the rising of Parliament in December, Chatham had set forth on that memorable visit to Bath from which dates his disastrous eclipse. In January 1767 he started to return to London. Gout drove him back, and he did not leave Bath again till the middle of February, when he got as far on his homeward journey as the Castle Inn at Marlborough. There, in the rambling red-brick mansion which has now been turned to such different uses, but was then chief among posting-houses on the great Bath road, he remained, invisible and unapproachable, till the end of the month. Astonished passers-by found inn and town alike thronged with servants in his livery; for, as Gilly Williams observed to Selwyn, he carried with him more equipage, household,

[1] Anson's *Grafton*, p. 105.

and retinue than most of the old patriarchs used to travel with in ancient days. At last on March 2 he arrived in London, "full of gout, and not able to stir hand or foot."

He found the Ministry in a state of demoralisation which the despondent letters of his colleagues had not exaggerated. When his face was hid for a moment, Burke said finely, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass. The Ministers fell an easy prey to the most virile and aspiring personality among them, Charles Townshend, who was now fairly embarked upon that course of champagne speeches which has won him his ill-starred renown. Townshend had already given signs of a spirit of rebellion which no one but Chatham in person could repress. On the Indian question he accepted the principle that the Company had a right to territorial revenue, in frank contradiction of the views of Chatham. His carelessness had largely contributed to bring about the grave defeat on the land-tax which the Government had just suffered in the House of Commons. Most serious of all, he had in the army debate of January 26 let fall the light-hearted but fateful declaration that he would find a revenue in America nearly, if not quite, sufficient to make her support an establishment of her own. Chatham was well aware of his insubordination. In December

CHARLES TOWNSHEND

After the portrait by Reynolds

1766 he had written to Grafton that Townshend's fluctuations and incurable weaknesses could not "comport with his remaining in that critical office."[1] As soon as he returned to London he offered Townshend's post, with the King's leave, to Lord North, who would not accept it. This refusal would doubtless not have altered his decision to dismiss Townshend; but fate forbade him to achieve his purpose. Before the end of the first week in March he became incapable of all mental effort; his long melancholy illness had begun.

From this time until July 1769 he remained buried in seclusion. The precise character of his strange malady has given rise to abundant conjectures. Of his contemporaries some pronounced him completely mad, while others were of the opinion that it was only a consummate piece of acting designed to relieve him of responsibility for the failure of his administration. The second hypothesis is wholly inconsistent with the character of Chatham, who would never have stooped to such a subterfuge; nor does it agree with the bulk of the evidence which we possess. The first hypothesis, thus absolutely stated, is at least misleading. It would probably be untrue to say—though this is a point which physicians and not laymen must finally decide—

[1] Anson's *Grafton*, p. 110.

that Chatham ever became actually insane, but at the same time it must be admitted that his behaviour at this time bore many traces of an unhinged mind, and that, whether or not his reason positively left him, it was no doubt most seriously shaken. His extravagances were never more conspicuous than during the period of his life which preceded this collapse, and the record of them reads like a chapter in the life of some barbaric potentate.

When he settled at North End in Hampstead, upon taking office, he began rapidly buying up all the houses round his own, "to ward off the noises of neighbourhood." He had done the same thing at Hayes, where he also spent great sums in hurrying on the planting of his grounds at night by the light of torches. At Burton Pynsent he had cedars and cypresses brought down from London to cover a bleak hill which bounded his view. In his kitchens might be seen chickens boiling or roasting without intermission through the day; so uncertain was his appetite, so imperative his whim to gratify it instantaneously when he felt disposed. Now he was filled with an agitated desire for Hayes, which he had sold in 1766 to Thomas Walpole. Walpole offered it to him for a month or for the whole summer; "he would immediately remove his family, who were there, and Lord Chatham

would find it well aired." But Chatham would be content with nothing less than its repossession. Under the combined pressure of Lady Chatham and Lord Camden, Walpole was persuaded to yield it in the course of the autumn with a good grace. The repurchase had been a delicate matter. "If this sacrifice," wrote Camden, "shall prove instrumental to the recovery of Lord Chatham's health, Mr. Walpole will be well paid; and I am afraid that nothing short of that will make him completely happy. It is impossible to describe as it deserved the pangs he felt at parting with this favourite place." [1]

Facts like these show into what strange latitudes Chatham's mind had wandered. A life of illness had told fatally upon his system and intensified his eccentricities. Now, when he stood most in need of a reserve of strength, his constitution failed him. Probably the peculiar temperament which never allowed him to unbend, helped to bring about this result. He had always lived at full pressure, and sustained himself, not without much self-consciousness and ostentation, at a high level of thought and action. The extreme tension thus produced now accentuated his morbid depression, and allowed the gout to settle like a pall over his disordered nerves instead of relieving him by a sharp attack of physical pain.

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 290.

There is no sadder or more impressive testimony to his greatness than the series of imploring notes which, while he lay prostrate at Hampstead through the months of 1767, poured in on him from George the Third, from Grafton, and from Shelburne, begging him to speak but a word, to grant but a momentary interview, in order to put an end to that distemper in the political world which was as calamitous as his own. On May 30, when dwindling majorities in the House of Lords seemed to foreshadow immediate disaster, the King made an insistent appeal to him to see Grafton. "Your duty and affection for my person," he wrote, "your own honour, call on you to make an effort; five minutes' conversation with you would raise his spirits, for his heart is good." Chatham obeyed, and Grafton went next day to Hampstead. His account of the interview gives a moving description of Chatham's state, of "the sight of his great mind bowed down, and thus weakened by disorder." The whole appalling catalogue of Ministerial woes was unfolded by Grafton. In reply Chatham could only beg him to stay in office himself, and to believe in Shelburne, whom he profoundly distrusted.[1]

This momentary glimpse was all that was seen of Chatham in politics for two years. His prostration grew more and more complete; at the bare

[1] Anson's *Grafton*, pp. 136–138.

mention of a word of business he would tremble and burst into tears. From time to time he entreated to be allowed to resign a Premiership that had long been merely titular. But it was not till October 1768 that he ceased to be the official head of an administration which had travelled far from every conviction which he cherished, and farthest of all in the matter of America. Within the limits of a short life of Chatham it would be impossible and undesirable to recount in detail the disastrous things which were done in his name,—"how Townshend, usurping command of the Government, madly reopened the fatal issue by the imposition of a number of import duties; how Parliament gave a careless assent to Townshend's proposal; how colonial resistance was renewed." [1] For, keenly as Chatham strove afterwards to avert the consequences of these errors, at the time they were committed he was politically dead, plunged in an isolation too deep to be penetrated even by the highest public calls or claims.

[1] Goldwin Smith, *United States*, p. 68.

CHAPTER VIII

CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLES

Reappearance of Chatham—His altered policy—Return of Wilkes—The Middlesex election—Chatham on the Constitutional question—The Ministry dissolves—Widespread agitation for reform—Lord North—Parliament and the Press—Effect of the struggle upon Chatham—His declarations on Parliamentary reform—Chatham in the House of Lords.

ON July 7, 1769, London was startled by the news that Chatham had been seen at the King's levee that morning. Violent fits of gout had at last dispelled his brooding malady, and he was indeed returning to a world that stood sorely in need of him. But he was returning to it an altered man. The gulf that separates the Chatham of 1769 from the Chatham of 1767 is not merely the gulf of two obliterated years. A change had passed over his character, the traces of which are from this time clearly visible. Since his great War Ministry his life had been broken and unhappy. This period had been

marked by one great outpouring of his genius, when he came forward to oppose the taxation of the colonies; but circumstances and his own caprice had turned the whole current of affairs awry. If Chatham had not played for his own hand in the sense in which most politicians of his age did so, he cannot be acquitted of having alienated the men who would naturally have followed him, by his dictatorial pose and his repellent and exasperating reserve. At length he had returned to power, only to succumb to a disabling illness; but before it crushed him he was allowed for a moment to see the consequences to which his impolicy was leading. Now, when his brain was cleared and he was able to survey things round him as they really were, he saw that nothing but the most single-hearted and unflagging service could arrest the misgovernment of his country. His patriotism, which had never really faltered, burned out the unworthier elements of his character like a consuming fire, and he came back to politics prepared to sacrifice his dearest prejudices to the furtherance of the common cause.

He discarded his old doctrine about the futility of party. It was this that had prevented him from coalescing with the Rockinghams and had placed him at the mercy of the King. He now made it plain that, if the Rockinghams would

forgive and forget, he would yield them ungrudging confidence and be proud to fight under their banner. "This I am resolved upon," he said, "that I will not even sit at council but to meet the friends of Lord Rockingham. Whatever differences may have been between us, they must be forgotten; the state of the nation is such that all private animosities must subside. He, and he alone, has a knot of spotless friends such as ought to govern this kingdom." In another conversation which was reported to Rockingham by the Duke of Portland, Chatham said that he united body and soul with Lord Rockingham and Sir George Savile in their measures, and that he would go hand in hand with Lord Rockingham and his friends, who were, and had proved themselves to be, the only true Whigs in the country. "Former little differences must be forgotten when the contest is *pro aris et focis*."[1] It is true that they were never quite forgotten. The Rockingham party was intellectually inspired by Burke, who never trusted Chatham, and pointed the sense of difference between them in his great pamphlet on the *Present Discontents*. Chatham, on the other hand, found it almost insuperably difficult to keep time with the slow and sedate pace at which the Rockinghams moved along the

[1] *Rockingham Memoirs*, ii. 142, 143.

path of reform. Now and then his fiery impatience would flare out, as when, in the following year, he complained that "moderation, moderation, was the burden of their song," and that he would have to be "a scarecrow of violence to the gentle warblers of the grove—the moderate Whigs and temperate statesmen." The best intentions could not efface this cleavage of temperament; but Chatham's generous sense of duty enabled him, in spite of it, to keep the alliance unbroken for the rest of his life.

He never did things by halves, and on the present occasion he did not stop at a *rapprochement* with the Rockinghams. He reconciled himself also with Temple, and with his other distinguished brother-in-law George Grenville, who was now on the point of atoning for a misdirected career by his great speech against the expulsion of Wilkes and by his invaluable Election Act. What was, in the light of his old obsequiousness, more remarkable still, he came to the conclusion that the best loyalty was to speak the unflattering truth to the King, and in his audience of July he made plain his disagreement with certain measures of his Majesty's Ministers, and expressed the hope that, if he was found opposing their policy in Parliament, his conduct might not be put down to pique or ambition, for office of any kind had ceased to be desirable to him.

But George the Third had not enough belief in other people's disinterestedness to see that Chatham was in earnest, or enough humour to realise the ridiculous unwisdom of the renewed campaign against Wilkes on which he had just launched his Government. That persecuted man of the people, whose previous fortunes have been recounted in an earlier chapter, had gone to Paris as soon as he became convalescent after his duel with Martin. There he learned that he had been found guilty in the Court of King's Bench of publishing the *Essay on Woman* and republishing the *North Briton*; and that, on his failure to come up for sentence, he had been declared an outlaw. For four years he remained abroad, making a leisurely tour through Italy, but spending most of his time in Paris, where he was immensely popular. But even the society of "the gay, the polite Athenians," as he called them, could not compensate him for his exclusion from England, and, after a furtive visit thither in 1766 and an unsuccessful appeal to Grafton for a pardon, he returned without any pretence of concealment, just before the General Election of 1768, and stood for the City of London. He was late in the field and was defeated; but, undismayed, he immediately proceeded to offer himself as a candidate for Middlesex. The rector of Brentford, where the polling for the

county took place, was Horne, earliest and most passionate of Wilkites, and so ably did he engineer his idol's electoral campaign that Wilkes was returned with ease at the head of the poll.

The long sequel to the Middlesex election then began. At the beginning of June 1768 the outlawry of Wilkes was reversed by Mansfield on a technical point of law; but the other verdicts against him still hung over his head, and ten days later he appeared again in court and was sentenced upon these to pay a fine of £1000 and to be imprisoned for twenty-two calendar months. He was fast becoming the object of that rapturous popular devotion which led Franklin to say that if George the Third had had a bad private character, and Wilkes a good one, the latter might have turned his sovereign out of the kingdom. After the Middlesex election "45" was chalked on every house in London, the whole city was illuminated, and the streets were paraded by a mob. When Parliament met in May, crowds shouting "Wilkes and Liberty!" surrounded the House, and in St. George's Fields there was a riot, in the course of which the troops fired and five or six lives were lost. Lord Weymouth, the Secretary of State, had written a letter to the magistrates before the disturbance, in which he urged them not to

shrink from employing the military. Wilkes obtained a copy and sent it to the *St. James's Chronicle,* where it was published in full, with a few violent words of preface by Wilkes himself. The King and his Ministers, who, in spite of the rising tide of public feeling, were resolved upon the expulsion of Wilkes from the House of Commons, determined to make this a *casus belli,* and on February 3, 1769, at the motion of Lord Barrington, Wilkes was expelled for his accumulated transgressions of the *North Briton,* the *Essay on Woman,* and the preface to Lord Weymouth's letter. Middlesex promptly re-elected him. The House retaliated by voting him incapable of sitting in the existing Parliament. He was again unanimously re-elected, and again disqualified. Then the Government unearthed a sufficiently intrepid rival candidate in Colonel Luttrell, and put him up for the seat. The result was that at this, the fourth Middlesex election, Wilkes obtained 1143 votes and Luttrell 296. Nothing daunted, the House reversed the verdict of the constituency and declared Luttrell duly elected as its member.

This unblushing violation of electoral rights raised a storm of indignation throughout England. The era of great public meetings began, and protests and petitions flowed in from every part of the country. In the midst of this ferment

Chatham emerged from his seclusion. Seldom, if ever, has there been a political reappearance more unlooked for and more stirring. Everyone who had served under him, as Sir George Trevelyan aptly says, was as restless as an Austerlitz veteran who had just heard of the landing from Elba.[1] For in the Ministry, leavened though it now was with the Bedfords, and led in the House of Commons by Lord North, there were still remaining some of Chatham's old adherents. There was the Prime Minister, Grafton, whose ductility, however, Chatham could not bring himself to forgive. There was Granby, the Commander-in-Chief, and Camden, the Lord Chancellor. They waited eagerly for him to show his hand, and he did not keep them long in suspense. When Parliament met for the Session of 1770 on January 9, Chatham, rising immediately after the seconder of the address in the House of Lords had sat down, moved an amendment inviting the Peers to consider the causes of the prevailing discontent, and "particularly the late proceedings of the House of Commons touching the incapacity of John Wilkes, Esqre., expelled by that House, to be elected as a member to serve in this present Parliament."[2]

[1] *Early History of Charles James Fox*, p. 209.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 369, *et seq.*

When he had finished, Camden rose to follow him. For some time, the Chancellor said, he had beheld with silent indignation the arbitrary measures of the Ministry. He had often drooped and hung down his head in Council, and disapproved by his looks those steps which he knew his avowed opposition could not prevent. However, he would do so no longer, but openly and boldly speak his mind. As to the incapacitating vote, he was of the same opinion as Lord Chatham. He considered it as a direct attack upon the first principles of the Constitution; and if, in giving his decision as a judge, he was to pay any regard to that vote, or to any other vote of the House of Commons in opposition to the known and established laws of the land, he should look upon himself as a traitor to his trust. Never did the magnetism of Chatham receive a more striking tribute than this speech of Camden's, and never was Mansfield, his great rival in the Lords, placed in a more embarrassing situation. The latter, whether from sheer consternation at his position, or from that natural leaning towards subtlety of thought and statement which led Chatham to describe him as the genius of penetration, began his speech by saying that his personal views as to the legality of the steps taken by the House of Commons were locked up in his own breast and

STATUE OF LORD MANSFIELD IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

should die with him. Then he went on to argue that, though the House of Commons could not declare general principles of law, it could, as a judicial body, decide special cases concerning its own composition. From such a decision there was no appeal, and there could be no remedy but by a fresh Act of Parliament.

This contention called up Chatham once more, and he delivered a reply which ranks among his very greatest speeches. Mansfield had practically attributed to the House of Commons an extra-legal power which would enable them to defy the wishes of the people whom they represented. To this Chatham retorted—

"The Constitution of this country has been openly invaded in fact; and I have heard, with horror and astonishment, that very invasion defended on principle. What is this mysterious power, undefined by law, unknown to the subject, which we must not approach without awe, nor speak of without reverence, which no man may question, and to which all men must submit? My lords, I thought the slavish doctrine of passive obedience had long since been exploded; and when our kings were obliged to confess that their title to the Crown, and the rule of their government, had no other foundation than the known laws of the land, I never expected to hear a divine right or a divine

infallibility attributed to any other branch of the Legislature."

If, said Chatham, Mansfield's doctrine were admitted, we had only exchanged the arbitrary power of a king for the arbitrary power of the House of Commons. "But, my lords, this is not the fact, this is not the Constitution; we have a law of Parliament, we have a Code in which every honest man may find it. We have a Magna Charta, we have the Statute Book, and the Bill of Rights." It was the duty of the House of Lords to redress the balance of the constitutional machine in view of this usurpation on the part of the House of Commons, and Chatham concluded with a splendid strain of rhetoric in which he appealed to his fellow-Peers:—

"My lords, I have better hopes of the Constitution, and a firmer confidence in the wisdom and constitutional authority of this House. It is your ancestors, my lords—it is to the English barons that we are indebted for the laws and Constitution we possess. Their virtues were rude and uncultivated, but they were great and sincere. Their understandings were as little polished as their manners, but they had hearts to distinguish truth from falsehood; they understood the rights of humanity, and they had spirit to maintain them. . . . Let us not, then, degenerate from the glorious example of our

ancestors. Those iron barons (for so I may call them when compared with the silken barons of modern days) were the guardians of the people; yet their virtues, my lords, were never engaged in a question of such importance as the present. A breach has been made in the Constitution, the battlements are dismantled, the citadel is open to the first invader, the walls totter, the Constitution is not tenable. What remains, then, but for us to stand foremost in the breach, to repair it or perish in it?"

The immediate result of Chatham's speech was the dismissal of Camden and the resignation of Granby, who, after declaring in the House of Commons that he would always lament his vote for the incapacitation of Wilkes as the greatest misfortune of his life, gave up the command of the army and the Mastership of the Ordnance, making, as Chatham said, "the name of Granby as revered by the friends of the Constitution as it is honoured and feared by the nation's enemies in the field."[1] Before the end of January a still greater sensation was caused by the retirement of Grafton. Chatham's return had not awakened in him the feelings of penitence which it stirred in Camden and Granby, for from his old leader he had now parted for ever; but he was bitterly dissatisfied with a Premiership which had made

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 392.

him irretrievably unpopular, and clouded almost at its dawn the promise of his early day.

It says much for the perseverance of George the Third, and more for his extraordinary success in corrupting the House of Commons, that, with all the integrity and most of the ability in the country against him, and in the face of an exasperated people, he still contrived that his party should hold the field. As the year 1770 went on, the task of maintaining his *régime* might well have seemed hopeless to a weaker man. The spirit of reform was astir, and that in unexpected quarters. In February Grenville introduced the Bill which at last put an end to the crying scandal of deciding disputed elections by a party vote of the House of Commons. A motion to inquire into the expenditure of the Civil List followed, and, though it failed, the indignation that lay behind it was not stifled. The Livery of London, headed by Beckford, presented to the King a remonstrance of astonishing outspokenness, in which they told their sovereign to his face that Parliament was corruptly subservient to his Majesty's Ministers, and that those Ministers and their majority between them had engaged in more ruinous proceedings than those in which Charles the First or James the Second ever indulged. In the House of Lords Chatham thundered con-

tinually on the subject of the Middlesex election, frankly declaring it to be the alarm bell to liberty, which he meant to ring incessantly in the ear of the kingdom. Junius, who was now at the height of his power and popularity, had, a few months before, discarding dukes and Ministers, indited his famous letter to the King.

That the general upheaval, which seemed so imminent, after all did not come, was due very largely to the two following circumstances. In the first place, George the Third secured a successor to Grafton in the Premiership who proved himself a perfectly invaluable servant for the purpose which his Majesty required. Lord North looked, to use the irresistibly comic phrase of Horace Walpole, like a blind trumpeter. But his passivity of conscience, his unruffled temper, his unfailing tact, and his debating skill, qualified him only too successfully to be the effective mouthpiece of a bad cause and a misguided King.

The second circumstance which prevented a convulsion was, that Wilkes, with an admirable persistence, prompted equally by his strong common-sense and his equally strong desire for his personal comfort, steadily declined to play the part of a republican hero. His subsequent career must be very briefly told. It is enough to say that his only ambitions were the acknowledgment of his violated Parliamentary rights, and as

much luxurious leisure as he could obtain in compensation for his past vexations.[1] He satisfied the first substantially in 1774, when Luttrell retired and he himself returned to Parliament, and in all due form in 1782, when the record of all the arbitrary proceedings against him was expunged from the journals of the House. He enjoyed a monopoly of popular admiration almost more complete than even Chatham had ever possessed, and after serving as Lord Mayor he at length secured the congenial place of Chamberlain of London.

Wilkism had not subsided, before a second struggle between Parliament and the people began. This centred round the question of Parliamentary reporting. In March 1771, at the instigation of Colonel Onslow, who had been unceremoniously handled in the papers, the House of Commons began an incautious campaign against the Press, which ended in flagrant illegality. In the course of it a messenger of the House of Commons attempted to take one of the incriminated printers, named Miller, into custody. Miller at once summoned a constable and gave the messenger himself in charge. Miller and the messenger were then both brought up at the Mansion House before Lord Mayor Crosby, Alderman Wilkes, and Alderman Oliver. Thither came also the deputy Serjeant-at-Arms from West-

[1] Trevelyan's *Early History of Fox*, p. 254.

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From the portrait by E. Pine in the Guildhall

minster to claim his missing victim. The Lord Mayor asked the messenger whether his warrant for arresting Miller was backed by a city magistrate, and on receiving a denial committed him for trial. War was thus declared between the privilege of Parliament and the charters of the City. The House of Commons summoned Crosby and Oliver, who were both members, to attend in their places, and Wilkes to present himself at the bar. Wilkes, whose tactical skill may be traced as inspiring the defence of the City throughout the whole proceeding, refused to appear anywhere but in his place as member for Middlesex; and Parliament shrank from a second conflict with the redoubted Alderman. Crosby and Oliver, however, came, and were committed to the Tower; and, not content with this, the House took the extraordinary step of forcing the Lord Mayor's Clerk to attend and to strike out from his books the recognisance binding their messenger to come up for trial. But the final result was a victory all along the line for the freedom of the Press and of Parliamentary reporting, as the printers were left at liberty, and Wilkes was unmolested, while Crosby and Oliver, both during their short confinement and on their release at the prorogation, were the objects of enthusiastic demonstrations of popular sympathy.

Chatham was quite prepared to admit with regard to this matter that the Lord Mayor laid himself open to censure by contravening the established jurisdiction of the House of Commons in his commitment of the messenger; but he also saw plainly the unwisdom of the course of action which was taken by Parliament. In a letter to Barré on March 21 he wrote: "These wretches called Ministers will be sick enough of their folly (not forgetting iniquity) before the whole business is over. If I mistake not, it will prove very pregnant, and one distress generate another; for they have brought themselves and their master where ordinary inability never arrives, and nothing but first-rate genius in incapacity can reach; I mean, a situation wherein there is nothing they can do which is not a fault. They have wantonly called up a conflict of high and sacred jurisdiction; neither can relinquish their right; one may err (and I continue to be clear that Lord Mayor errs), but his error, taking it to be sincere and conscientious, cannot be criminal or punishable." [1]

The contest with the printers seems finally to have convinced Chatham of the hopeless character of the existing Parliament and the necessity for drastic and immediate action. On May 1 he brought forward in the House of Lords a motion

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 119.

for a dissolution, and in a few telling sentences surveyed the struggle which had just been raging. The Commons, he said, not satisfied with shutting their doors, would overturn the liberty of the Press. The printers had spirit, and resisted. The magistrates of London undertook their defence, but the Commons proceeded with outrageous violence. "These men, who had allowed the prostituted electors of Shoreham counsel to defend a bargain to sell their borough by auction, would not grant the same indulgence to the Lord Mayor of London, pleading for the laws of England and the conscientious discharge of his duty." And the expunging of the messenger's recognisance was, he said, "the act of a mob, and not of a Parliament."

At the same time he made a most important declaration on the subject of Parliamentary reform. Calling for a dissolution in the closing passages of his speech, he wound up as follows: "Not that I imagine this act alone sufficient. . . . The influence of the Crown is become so enormous that some stronger bulwark must be erected for the defence of the Constitution. The Act for constituting septennial Parliaments must be repealed. Formerly the inconvenience attending short Parliaments had great weight with me; but now we are not debating upon a question of convenience; our all is at stake; our

whole Constitution is giving way; and, therefore, with the most deliberate and solemn conviction, I declare myself a convert to triennial Parliaments." [1]

This deliverance shows how the impression made upon Chatham by the lawless proceedings of the House of Commons majority, acting under the direction of the King, had gradually deepened. But its full significance can only be measured by setting it side by side with his previous pronouncements on the question. In June 1770, when a deputation from the City of London waited on him with a resolution of the Common Council thanking him for his efforts in furtherance of Parliamentary reform, he said: "With all my deference to the sentiments of the City, I am bound to declare that I cannot recommend triennial Parliaments as a remedy against that canker in the Constitution, venality in elections; ready to submit my opinion to better judgment, if the wish for that measure shall become prevalent in the kingdom." [2] And even in April 1771 he had written to Shelburne: "As to shortening the duration of Parliaments, I find a real dislike to the measure, in minds very sound about other public matters. The dread of the more frequent returns of corruption, together

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 172, 173.

[2] *Ibid.* iii. 464, 465.

with every dissoluteness which elections spread through the country, strongly indisposes families of all descriptions to such an alteration." [1]

His palinode was made under pressure of necessity, but there is not the smallest reason to doubt that it was sincere. He approached the subject with an open mind; and if reflection led him in the direction of democracy, he would not draw back. It was by his conversion to triennial Parliaments that he drew nearest to nascent Radicalism and recoiled farthest from Burke and the Whigs.

But this particular remedy did not exhaust Chatham's ideas about reform. Shortly after his return to politics, on January 22, 1770, he had traversed the whole question in a memorable speech in the House of Lords. Corruption had been increased tenfold by the appearance of the Indian nabobs on the scene, and Chatham took their electioneering excesses as the text for his remarks. "The riches of Asia," he said, "have been poured in upon us, and have brought with them not only Asiatic luxury, but, I fear, Asiatic principles of government. Without connections, without any natural interest in the soil, the importers of foreign gold have forced their way into Parliament by such a torrent of private corruption as no private hereditary fortune could

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 157.

resist. For this great evil some immediate remedy must be provided." Chatham recognised the iniquity of the small pocket boroughs, which he called the rotten parts of the Constitution, but he did not consider their extinction a practicable measure of reform. "The limb," he said, "is mortified, but the amputation might be death." He looked to the cities and counties for salvation, and he proposed to counteract existing evils by giving an additional member to each county. The ruling idea of the Constitution, according to Chatham, was that there should be "a permanent relation between the constituent and representative body of the people." An increase of county members, as representing the soil, would, he considered, best meet the need for more public spirit in the House of Commons.[1] As he himself said later in the year: "Purity of Parliament is the cornerstone in the Commonwealth, and, as one obvious means towards this necessary end is to strengthen and extend the natural relation between the constituents and the elected, I have, in this view, publicly expressed my earnest wishes for a more full and equal representation, by the addition of one knight of the shire in a county, as a farther balance to the mercenary boroughs." [2]

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 406, 407.

[2] To the City of London Deputation, *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 465.

It is easy to point out the inadequacies in this scheme, the most obvious of them being that it made no provision for the representation of those cities which were the growing centres of industry and intelligence. But it was at all events a contribution. Courageously taking up the question in the face of difficulties which made success well-nigh impossible, he laid it seriously before Parliament, and lent the weight of his great name to a cause which was founded in justice and destined to eventual triumph, immature as in his day it was.

Since the renewal of Chatham's activity our eyes have been fixed on domestic affairs. The course of British colonial policy will be considered in the following chapter; British foreign policy was practically in abeyance. In 1770 Spain made a descent upon the Falkland Islands, which had been in British occupation for four years, and captured and evicted the little garrison. The possibility of hostilities with his ancient enemy aroused the keenest interest in Chatham, who did his best to stimulate the Government to energetic measures. Its inertia in the sphere of foreign politics was almost as depressing to him as its crusade on behalf of privilege and prerogative at home. "England at this day," he wrote, "is no more like to old England, or England forty years ago, than the monsignori of modern Rome

are like to the Decii, the Gracchi, or the Catos."[1] Further, his activities had to be confined to a peculiarly lethargic House of Lords, in which the labours of opposition, he complained, were like the labours of Hercules. "We are reduced to a very snug party of unhearing and unfeeling lords, and the tapestry hangings,[2] which last, mute as Ministers, still tell us more than all the Cabinet on the subject of Spain, and the manner of treating with an insidious and haughty Power."

In spite of these disadvantages, he delivered on November 22, 1770, a forcible and noteworthy speech on the question at issue.[3] Its tone was incisive, and even bellicose; but Chatham was well advised in thinking that no language could be too strong if it only brought home to Ministers the paramount necessity of vigilance and preparation in face of the sleepless activity of France and Spain. He laid down with great lucidity, and with an authority to which no other English statesman could lay claim, the primal requirements of our naval policy. The lapse of a hundred and thirty years since he spoke has profoundly modified the situation, but there is a familiar echo in the observation that England must maintain such a sufficient naval force that

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 83.

[2] The tapestry depicting the defeat of the Armada.

[3] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 4, *et seq.*

even the combined fleets of her two most likely foes might never be masters of the Channel. Probably, however, the passages of the speech which are read with most interest to-day are those in which, with impressive iteration, Chatham turned to praise famous men. There is the curious and remarkable eulogy of Cromwell, who "did not derive his intelligence from spies in the Cabinet of every prince in Europe; he drew it from the cabinet of his own sagacious mind. He observed facts, and traced them forward to their consequences. From what was, he concluded what must be, and he never was deceived." There is the endorsement, memorable as coming from the lips of his antagonist, of the statesmanship of Carteret, whose abilities "did honour to this House and to this nation; in the upper departments of government he had not his equal." And there is the generous tribute to Anson, to whose "wisdom, experience, and care (and I speak it with pleasure), the nation owes the glorious naval successes of the last war."

CHAPTER IX

THE BREACH WITH AMERICA

American policy under Townshend and North—The tea duty—Benjamin Franklin—The Boston Tea-party—Coercion of Boston—America rallies to her side—The Philadelphia Congress—Chatham's approbation of the Congress—He speaks against coercion—Introduces a Bill to solve the problem—Succumbs to illness—The policy of France—Chatham returns to politics—Speech on the employment of Indians—France joins America—Critical position of England—The King refuses to summon Chatham—Chatham's last speech in the House of Lords—His death—Burial in Westminster Abbey.

THE closing scene of Chatham's life has imprinted itself deeply on the national imagination. While the early part of his political career is forgotten, and many of its middle and later phases very dimly remembered, his championship of the cause of America is hardly less familiar than the most brilliant passages of his War Ministry. It is still possible to maintain, and to maintain with reason, that if, even at the eleventh hour, he could have returned to office

with a free hand, separation might have been averted, or at least long postponed. But that is one of the unvouchsafed opportunities of history. The task actually set him was Sisyphean; for, with the burden of age and infirmity upon him, he had to contend against the ignorance of the British governing class, a venal Parliament, and the blind rancour of the King.

The extraordinary pettiness of British colonial policy during this critical epoch almost passes comprehension. Fever had smitten down Charles Townshend before the year in which he carried his Budget had run out, but his American policy remained behind him in the shape of the importation duties which he had imposed. Would Parliament have the sagacity or the moral courage to repeal them? In March 1770 Lord North introduced a measure in the House of Commons repealing all the duties except that upon tea—a duty, be it observed, which brought scarcely £300 into the Treasury. Grafton had, to his honour, striven for unqualified repeal; but the King, and the Bedfords, who were strongly anti-American, won the day, and the tea duty was retained. Its retention was meant to keep alive the principle of the Declaratory Act, and it was so far successful in its object that the Americans saw in it the menace of other measures of the kind and the fruitful parent of discord, and it

did eventually prove the efficient cause of war. Yet, half-hearted as was the nature of the concessions thus made, the attitude of the colonists immediately changed for the better. Though tea was still boycotted, the non-importation agreements in the case of other articles were dropped, and the reviving effect upon British commerce was felt at once. In spite of the perennial irritation caused in America by the presence of British troops at Boston, in spite of ebullitions of the smuggling spirit like the burning of the ship *Gaspee* in 1772, in spite of the significant formation of committees of grievances, colonial turbulence was stilled from this time to 1773.

In that year events began once more to move fast towards their fatal conclusion. Benjamin Franklin had been for long colonial agent and virtually ambassador in England, the chosen representative of the colonies abroad, the father of American letters and of science. He now committed that fatal error of making public the Hutchinson letters which has been well described as his social catastrophe. The brutal and blasting invective of Wedderburn, delivered before thirty-five amused and applauding Privy Councillors and in the presence of Franklin himself, set an indelible seal on the transaction, deeply wounded Franklin, and exasperated the Americans, who

felt themselves stricken in the public insult offered to their great fellow-countryman.

More momentous still and more irretrievable were the outburst of violence at Boston and the coercive measures which it provoked. This would never have occurred but for the existence of the tea duty; its occasion was as follows:— Lying in the warehouses of the East India Company was an immense quantity of tea, for which, if only the Government could be persuaded to repeal the duty, America formed an obvious and extensive market. No course more politic or more lucrative to all parties concerned than the repeal of the tea duty could have been adopted at this moment. But with blind persistence the Government retained the import duty payable in America, while remitting to the Company the duty on exportation previously paid in England. As the exportation duty was a shilling on the pound, while the import duty was only threepence, the result of the step was to make tea exceptionally cheap for the Americans. But there was a principle at stake. As Burke said, with admirable conciseness, in his speech on American Taxation: "No man ever doubted that the commodity of tea could bear an imposition of threepence. But no commodity will bear threepence, or will bear a penny, when the general feelings of men are irritated, and

two millions of people are resolved not to pay. The feelings of the colonies were formerly the feelings of Great Britain. Theirs were formerly the feelings of Mr. Hampden when called upon for the payment of twenty shillings. Would twenty shillings have ruined Mr. Hampden's fortune? No! but the payment of half twenty shillings, on the principle it was demanded, would have made him a slave."

At the end of 1773 the fleet of tea-ships appeared upon the American coast, where it was awaited as if it had been a second Armada. The cargoes for New York and Philadelphia were never landed. The cargo for Charleston was stored up in cellars, where it rotted away. The Boston cargo was flung into the sea by a body of colonists disguised as Mohawk Indians, who had boarded the ships in which it lay.

England had been congratulating herself on her moderation in repealing all the obnoxious duties but one, and the news of the outrage at Boston came to her with a startling shock. The British people did not stop to consider minutely the course of provocation which had led up to it, and they gave their moral support to the policy of the King and his Ministers. That policy was one of undisguised coercion, and it was directed entirely upon the head of Massachusetts, the other American communities implicated in resistance to the duty being deliberately ignored.

One measure closed the port of Boston, and transferred its Custom House to Salem. Another provided that the Council of Massachusetts should be nominated by the Crown, restricted the right of public meeting, and placed the appointment and tenure of all judges and magistrates in the hands of the Governor. A third empowered the Governor to send any person in Massachusetts charged with a capital offence, to be tried in another colony or in Great Britain. This mass of punitive legislation was virtually a declaration of war, and such the colonists felt it to be. The first measure, they said, took away the property of unoffending thousands for the act of a few individuals, the second annihilated their chartered liberties, and the third made their lives liable to be destroyed with impunity.

Chatham was not well enough to speak in the earlier debates of this time. But his thoughts on the coercive policy of 1774 may be effectually gathered from a letter which he wrote to Shelburne in March. In this he said that the violence committed upon the tea cargo was certainly criminal, and Boston owed reparation to the East India Company for the destruction of its property. "But," he went on, "the methods proposed by way of coercion appear to me too severe, as well as highly exceptionable in order of time, for reparation ought first to be demanded

in a solemn manner, and refused by the town and magistracy of Boston, before such a Bill of pains and penalties can be called just. Perhaps a fatal desire to take advantage of this guilty tumult of the Bostonians in order to crush the spirit of liberty among the Americans in general, has taken possession of the heart of Government. If that mad and cruel measure should be pushed, one needs not to be a prophet to say England has seen her best days."[1] Five months later he sounded the same despondent note: "I fear the bond of union between us and America will be cut off for ever. Devoted England will then have seen her best days, which nothing can restore again!"[2]

He reappeared in the House of Lords in the course of the year, and, in a speech upon the Bill for quartering soldiers on the Americans, uttered a solemn and impressive plea for conciliation. And if England could have realised in its full extent the magnitude of the task before her, she might even now have again retraced her steps. For America had rallied instantly to the side of Boston. From Salem and Marblehead, the two neighbouring communities which had been selected to ruin her, to the distant colonies of the Carolinas, came not only sympathy but substantial aid. And a more speaking sign of the times than

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 336, 337. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 361.

even the succour of Boston was furnished by the great Congress at Philadelphia, in which the representatives of twelve colonies met. Before the end of October it had drawn up that series of resolutions and addresses the determined lines of which made clear that, if the idea of independence was still scouted by the vast majority of the American people, coercion was none the less impossible.

Chatham's attitude towards the Congress deserves more than a passing thought, as it lay at the foundation of his later American policy. He realised its supreme importance as representing the collective opinion of America, and he discerned the great part which it might play alike in negotiation and in any scheme of reconstruction that should be mooted. For the spirit in which it went to work he had nothing but the heartiest approval. "I have not words to express my satisfaction," he wrote on Christmas Eve, "that the Congress has conducted this most arduous and delicate business with such manly wisdom and calm resolution as do the highest honour to their deliberations. Very few are the things contained in their resolves that I could wish had been otherwise. Upon the whole, I think it must be evident to every unprejudiced man in England who feels for the rights of mankind, that America, under all her oppressions and provoca-

tions, holds forth to us the most fair and just opening for restoring harmony and affectionate intercourse as heretofore." [1]

But Chatham did not confine his views at this crisis to his private correspondence. He meant to make them heard in Parliament, and in January 1775 he did so. His enemies would have been only too glad if he had kept silence. Infinite pains were being taken, as we learn from a note written by Lady Chatham to her husband two days before the debate, to create an impression that he was determined not to trouble himself about American affairs, and that he did not intend to come to town. "For God's sake, sweet life," he wrote in answer, "don't disquiet yourself about the impudent and ridiculous lie of the hour. It is only a pitiful device of fear; Court fear and faction fear. If gout does not put in a veto, which I trust in Heaven it will not, I will be in the House of Lords on Friday, then and there to make a motion relative to America." He meant, as he said grimly next day, to knock at the Minister's door to wake him.[2]

The debate took place on January 20, when he moved for an address to the King to withdraw the troops from Boston. His speech was memorable, as were also some of the circumstances of its delivery. For among Chatham's audience

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 368. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 370, 371.

was William Pitt, then a Cambridge undergraduate of fifteen, but destined within nine years to be Prime Minister of England; and his enthusiastic appreciation of his father's oratory is attested by the charming note he wrote to his mother on the morning after the debate. There too, by Chatham's special desire, was Franklin. Supremely indifferent whether or not the great American had been ostracised by official England, Chatham himself led him into the House of Lords and, as he handed him over to the charge of the doorkeeper, said, "This is Dr. Franklin, whom I would have admitted into the House," in tones loud enough for the surrounding throng of Peers and friends of Peers to hear.

Chatham was the leader of a forlorn hope, but his assault was boldly and unflinchingly delivered. Gage's army in Boston, he said, was an army of impotence and irritation; he urged Parliament to adopt the conciliatory measure of withdrawing it. "If illegal violences have been, as it is said, committed in America, prepare the way, open the door of possibility, for acknowledgment and satisfaction; but proceed not to such coercion, such proscription; cease your indiscriminate inflictions; amerce not thirty thousand, oppress not three millions, for the fault of forty or fifty individuals. Such severity of justice must for ever render incurable the wounds you have

already given your colonies; you irritate them to unappeasable rancour. What though you march from town to town, and from province to province; though you should be able to enforce a temporary and local submission, which I only suppose, not admit,—how shall you be able to secure the obedience of the country you leave behind you in your progress, to grasp the dominion of eighteen hundred miles of continent, populous in numbers, possessing valour, liberty, and resistance? . . . As an American, I would recognise to England her supreme right of regulating commerce and navigation; as an Englishman in birth and principles, I recognise to the Americans their supreme inalienable right in their property—a right which they are justified in the defence of to the last extremity. To maintain this principle is the common cause of the Whigs on the other side of the Atlantic, and on this. 'Tis liberty to liberty engaged,' that they will defend themselves, their families, and their country. In this great cause they are immovably allied; it is the alliance of God and nature—immutable, eternal—fixed as the firmament of heaven. For myself, I must declare and avow that in all my reading and observation—and it has been my favourite study; I have read Thucydides, and have studied and admired the master-states of the world—that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom

of conclusion, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the general Congress at Philadelphia."

If the Ministers persevered in misadvising and misleading the King, Chatham concluded, "I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his Crown; but I will affirm that they will make the Crown not worth his wearing. I will not say that the King is betrayed; but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone."[1] Not content with a single great oration, he rose in the course of the debate to make another shorter speech. It was one of his energetic days. On the next morning William Pitt wrote to Lady Chatham: "My father has slept well, without any burning in the feet or restlessness. He has had no pain, but is lame in one ankle near the instep, from standing so long. No wonder he is lame, his first speech lasted above an hour, and the second half an hour—surely the two finest speeches that ever were made before, unless by himself! He will be with you to dinner by four o'clock."[2]

While few, if any, English statesmen have exercised a greater influence by sheer unaided eloquence than Chatham, none have realised more fully than he the necessity of translating eloquence into action. It is characteristic of him,

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 377–384. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 377.

that, ten days after the delivery of this speech, he came forward with a Bill for settling the troubles in America. This was his most detailed contribution towards the solution of the American question. Whatever the futility of such a proposal at a time when not the wisdom of Solomon could have turned Parliament from the course upon which it was obstinately bent, it remains a monument of Chatham's ideas of constructive statesmanship. He fully countenanced Imperial supremacy on the one hand, and colonial self-government on the other; the problem was to make the two principles compatible. His Bill gave to the colonies the sole right of self-taxation, made their charters inviolable, and reformed the tenure of their judges and the jurisdiction of the Admiralty Courts. At the same time it decisively affirmed the supreme authority of Parliament in all matters that could properly be called Imperial, particularly commerce and navigation; and it asserted the right to despatch armies to any colony without the assent of the colonial assemblies.

These may be called the indispensable conditions of any scheme of settlement, but by themselves they were not enough. There was need of some mediating body to adjust the burden of colonial contribution, to represent adequately American opinion, and to maintain

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After the portrait by Reynolds in the National Portrait Gallery

diplomatic relations with the British Parliament. Such a body Chatham sought and found in the Philadelphia Congress. It was to be legalised and made permanent; it was to be asked to make a free grant to the Imperial revenue, and to fix the proportion to be paid by each province; and it was to avow the ultimate supremacy of Parliament, as a preliminary to the exercise of the right of self-taxation and the repeal of the coercive Acts.

This recognition of the Congress is what mainly differentiates Chatham's Bill from the scheme outlined by Burke in the great speech on Conciliation with America which he delivered on March 22, 1775. Of Burke's proposals it may be said that they would have restored the *status quo*, but there was no guarantee that they would preserve it. Chatham was probably right in thinking that the best security for the colonies against Parliamentary encroachment was that their strength and unity should be made so patent that the bare idea of coercion must be dismissed from the British mind. In objection to his scheme it may of course be said that, as soon as the Congress made America articulate and conscious of her strength, she was bound to break away. But on Chatham's side must be remembered the moderate attitude which the Congress in point of fact took up, and the united testimony

of Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, and John Adams,[1] that what the mass of colonists desired was not separation but redress. Chatham's Bill, in any case, deserves most careful consideration from all who would appreciate his policy as an organiser of empire. Characteristic of it was his willingness to transform the *de facto* Government of Congress, the "rebel assembly," into a *de jure* Government as an official body, and his unwavering belief in the political genius of the American people; characteristic above all was his dream of a federation under the British flag. That dream may have been too far advanced for his age, but we who see a Dominion of Canada and an Australian Commonwealth can scarcely call it visionary.

Parliament, however, treated the Bill much more summarily, and refused to admit it to a second reading. Burke's resolutions met the same fate. Then another catastrophe overtook the Opposition. Chatham collapsed again, and without him it was maimed. For two years he was withdrawn from politics—the two years which saw the first blood shed at Lexington, and the opening indecisive period of the war. During 1776 we catch occasional glimpses of his attitude towards the struggle. He treated it as a civil war, "the unhappy war with our fellow-subjects of America."

[1] Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, iv. 185.

Consistently with this view, he refused to allow his eldest son, who had been in Canada under Carleton, to serve against the colonists. To Dr. Addington, his physician, he made a formal declaration that his feelings with regard to America were unchanged, and identical with those set forth by him in the Bill which he had offered to the House of Lords. "Confiding in the friendship of Dr. Addington, he requested of him to preserve this in memory; that in case he should not recover from the long illness under which he laboured, the doctor might be enabled to do him justice by bearing testimony that he persevered unshaken in the same opinions." Chatham added that he was fully persuaded that in a very few years France would set her foot on English ground. Her policy for the present would probably be to wait while England plunged herself still more inextricably in the ruinous American War. During this time she would abet America indirectly, but she would in the end take the open course of declaring war upon England.[1]

This declaration was made by Chatham in July 1776, and it is an extraordinarily true picture of the course which France had in fact just decided to take. Vergennes, her Foreign Minister, had at the beginning of the year drawn up the celebrated memorial in which he laid down what

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 424, 425.

should be the true course of French policy in view of the American War. If the military and financial means of the two Bourbon kings had been in a state of development proportionate to their substantial power, he said, "it would, no doubt, be necessary to say to them that Providence had marked out this moment for the humiliation of England." But though a unique opportunity was offered by the conflict to reduce England to the status of a secondary power, and France and Spain should not shrink ultimately from open war, for the present their policy must be confined to giving secret assistance to the Americans. In exact accordance with the prediction of Chatham, Vergennes declared: "The continuance of the war for at least one year is desirable to the two Crowns. To that end the British Ministry must be maintained in the persuasion that France and Spain are pacific, so that it may not fear to embark in an active and costly campaign; while, on the other hand, the courage of the Americans should be kept up by secret favours and vague hopes which will prevent accommodation."

There is much in the situation in France at this moment upon which it is tempting to linger—the differing policies of Vergennes and Turgot, the zenith of Franklin's curious ascendency in Paris, the idealisation of the American rebellion by sympathetic French thought, and the Nemesis

by which the consequences of France's intervention recoiled upon her own head in the shape of the French Revolution; but we must content ourselves with noting the broad facts of the position. Obedient to Vergennes, the Government adopted unhesitatingly the policy of revenge. In the course of 1776 France furnished America with a substantial loan, and a continued stream of munitions of war. The note of alarm which Chatham sounded with regard to French aggression was thus amply justified. It is probable that the information with which he was supplied was much more complete than that which was at the disposal of the British Government, but nothing can excuse the lethargy of that Government in the face of a patent and stupendous danger.

In the spring of 1777 Chatham was well enough to reappear in Parliament, and on May 30 he brought forward a motion for the cessation of hostilities. Weak as he still was, we have William Pitt's assurance that his speech was full of his usual force and vivacity. He dwelt on the menacing attitude of France, whose pretensions, he said, were increasing daily, while she still deferred as long as possible the actual signing of a treaty with America. Our chances of dispersing the American forces were remote. "I might as well talk of driving them before me

with this crutch."[1] In the debate on the address on November 20 he was again in his place, and moved an amendment that the King should be pleased to cause the most speedy and effectual measures to be taken for restoring peace in America. He declared persistently that its conquest was an impossibility. He urged that it was not even yet too late to appeal to "the sound parts of America," by which he meant the middle and southern colonies. In almost humorous tones of national pride he expressed his disbelief that the colonists, the sons of England, could combine seriously with her ancestral foes. "America and France cannot be congenial; there is something decisive and confirmed in the honest American that will not assimilate to the futility and levity of Frenchmen."

Then, in a passage which is among the best remembered fragments of his oratory, he denounced the policy which had not shrunk from employing against the colonists the terrors of Indian war. "But, my lords, who is the man that, in addition to these disgraces and mischiefs of an army, has dared to authorise and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage? To call into civilised alliance the wild and inhuman savage of the woods; to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 433.

disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of his barbarous war against our brethren?" Lord Suffolk was incautious enough to say in reply that "it was perfectly justifiable to use all the means that God and nature put into our hands." This roused Chatham once more. With a rhetoric grandiose and elaborate indeed, but none the less the spontaneous expression of his imaginative mind, he reprobated "principles equally abhorrent to religion and humanity." "I call upon the bishops to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn, upon the learned judges to interpose the purity of their ermine, to save us from this pollution; I call upon the honour of your lordships to reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own; I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country to vindicate the national character; I invoke the genius of the Constitution."[1]

And now it seemed as if the star of England was at last about to set. On October 17, 1777, Burgoyne had surrendered at Saratoga. At the beginning of December the news was brought to Paris, and France immediately entered into formal alliance with America. In March 1778 the French ambassador in London made known the treaty, diplomatic relations were broken off, and war with France began. England stood absolutely

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 450–459.

alone, with a discredited Ministry, an inadequate navy, and an army locked up in the New World. Saratoga had so far impressed the King that, before the Franco-American alliance was made public, he had allowed the Ministry to enter upon a policy of conciliation, to give up all the points in dispute, and to despatch peace commissioners to America. But any boon which was offered to the colonists by the hands of North was fated to rejection, and rejection was doubly certain when France stood forth as America's ally.

At this supreme and culminating moment all eyes in England turned to Chatham. His genius alone was equally potent for conquest and conciliation. No other name was so loved in America, none was so terrible to France. Even now, with an invincible optimism, he still refused to believe that the breach with the colonies was final. He only clung to them with a more passionate assurance when France prepared to enter upon "the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy." While the Rockingham Whigs were prepared, in order to halve the danger, to let the colonies go, Chatham's view was that no foreign intervention should be allowed to shatter the essential unity of the English-speaking race. His policy was therefore to concentrate all military effort upon the defeat of France, and to retain the colonies, even though they struggled

to depart, until by his own persuasive counsels, and his overthrow of their ally, he led them back to that allegiance which he hoped and believed they were still ready to embrace once more. It may safely be said that no one but Chatham could have carried out such a policy, and that even in his hands it would have presented almost insuperable difficulties. But it was the one absolutely honourable and statesmanlike course, and Chatham was so unquestionably the first of living politicians that it was a national duty to commit the country to his guidance.

Everything pointed one way, and even Bute and Mansfield gave expression to the desire of the people. North himself entreated the King to send for Chatham. But George the Third remained obdurate and unmoved. He knew that Chatham's advent would mean the reversal of his own personal *régime*, and the overthrow of the Court party and the Crown influence which he had made it the object of his reign to establish. He refused to put Chatham in power; he refused to make any sort of concession to him except the preposterous offer of a subordinate place to North. He thus deliberately closed the door by which alone it seemed possible that succour and success might come. His conduct in so doing has been pronounced by Mr. Lecky to be as criminal as any of those acts which led Charles

the First to the scaffold.[1] It has been dimmed in the popular recollection, because the death of Chatham followed it so quickly as to produce the impression that, whatever line of action the King had taken, the consequences must have been the same. But George the Third is not to be so lightly acquitted at the bar of history. Even a month of Chatham's leadership might have done much; and, in any case, our after-knowledge of the event cannot extenuate in the least degree the culpability of the King's action.

On April 7 Chatham spoke for the last time in the House of Lords. The Duke of Richmond was to move that the British forces should be withdrawn from America, thus tacitly conceding independence. Though almost prostrate with illness, Chatham came down to oppose the motion. In a black suit and swathed with flannel he entered the House, leaning upon crutches, and supported on either side by his son William and his son-in-law Lord Mahon. After Richmond had spoken he rose with difficulty. His voice was low, and at times his memory lapsed, but the House of Commons which he used to sway never listened to him with more awestruck attention than did the House of Lords on this supreme occasion. His pale and sunken face and glittering eye warned his audience only too surely that they

[1] *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, iv. 458.

THE LAST SCENE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

After the painting by Copley in the National Gallery

were witnessing the closing scene of an historic life. A thrill must have passed through them like that which pierced the heart of Wordsworth when, on a stormy evening at Grasmere, he heard of the expected end of Charles James Fox—

> "A Power is passing from the earth
> To breathless nature's dark abyss."

No other speech of Chatham's breathes a more indomitable patriotism than the last words which he spoke with the hand of death upon him. While English history is read and English oratory remembered, it will not be forgotten how he rejoiced that he was still alive to lift up his voice "against the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy"; how he asked whether the great kingdom that had survived whole and entire all shocks from the Danish depredations to the Armada, was now to fall prostrate before the House of Bourbon, whether it was to stoop so low as to say to its ancient inveterate enemy, "Take all we have, only give us peace!" and how, finally, he urged his fellow-countrymen to make at least one effort, and, if they were to fall, to fall like men.[1]

Richmond replied, and then Chatham tried to rise again, but, pressing his hand to his heart, he

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 519.

sank down speechless and unconscious. He was carried to Downing Street, and thence to Hayes. There for more than four weeks he lingered, tended by his wife and children. We know that, while he thus lay dying, he had read to him Homer's narrative of the burial of Hector and the lamentation of Troy.

On May 11 he passed away. A public funeral had been voted, and he was laid in Westminster Abbey. Macaulay's sonorous prose has once for all described the scene. "The banner of the lordship of Chatham was borne by Colonel Barré, attended by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Rockingham. Burke, Savile, and Dunning upheld the pall. Lord Camden was conspicuous in the procession. The chief mourner was young William Pitt. After the lapse of more than twenty-seven years, in a season as dark and perilous, his own shattered frame and broken heart were laid, with the same pomp, in the same consecrated mould." [1]

[1] *The Earl of Chatham* (Second Essay).

CHAPTER X

CHARACTERISTICS

Burke upon Chatham—Later views—Chatham as a young politician—His lack of Parliamentary influence as then understood — His integrity — Inconsistencies produced by his ambition—The mimetic element in his character —His oratory—Essentially a man of action—Significance of his career in Imperial and domestic politics—His patriotism and love of liberty.

TWELVE years afterwards, Burke, while looking through Lord Rockingham's papers, came upon a letter written to his old leader by Chatham in 1770, and on the back of it made the following note:—"July 13, 1792. Looking over poor Lord Rockingham's papers, I find this letter from a man wholly unlike him. It concerns my pamphlet ("The Cause of the Discontents"). I remember to have seen this knavish letter at the time. The pamphlet is itself, by anticipation, an answer to that grand artificer of fraud. *He* would not like it. It is pleasant to hear *him* talk of the *great extensive public*, who never conversed but

with a parcel of low toadeaters. Alas! alas! how different the *real* from the ostensible public man! Must all this theatrical stuffing and raised heels be necessary for the character of a great man?—Edmund Burke."

Then, as if suddenly smitten with a pang of remorse, he adds the qualification: "Oh, but this does not derogate from his great, splendid side. God forbid." [1]

Posterity has revised Burke's judgment, but yet, alike in its scathing criticism and its outburst of generous eulogy, it represents not unfairly the perplexity and the fluctuations of opinion which have been felt by all those who have tried to estimate the career and character of Chatham. That career abounded in dramatic contrasts, and these have tended to seize upon the imagination, to the exclusion of all other features in his life. Historical writers, whether consciously or not, have given strength to this tendency. The stereotyped portrait of Chatham is probably Macaulay's. Now, though Macaulay in his two celebrated Essays yields far less than might have been expected, in view of the nature of his subject and his own passion for antithesis, to the temptation of dwelling exclusively upon the vicissitudes and incongruities in the life of Chatham, he could not fail, and it was hardly to

[1] *Rockingham Memoirs*, ii. 195

be wished that he should fail, to make the most of his opportunity for presenting effectively the contrasted lights and shades in one of the most singular careers of modern English history. The same result is apparent in the less dramatic but much more luminous and suggestive survey of Chatham's life by Mr. Lecky. "Of all very great Englishmen," writes the latter, "he is perhaps the one in whom there was the largest admixture of the qualities of a charlatan."[1]

That in a sense such a delineation and such strictures are just, no one will be disposed to deny. The incongruities in Chatham's character are of the first importance, and they are in themselves so striking that the descriptive powers of an historian are not in much danger of exaggerating them. But, though in a presentment of the life of Chatham they must always dominate the picture, they cannot be rightly understood unless full account is taken of the underlying causes which made them what they were. We must beware of regarding Chatham as a mere bundle of contradictions. Whatever his qualities and defects, the extraordinary position he achieved in the course of his self-made career forbids us to disbelieve in his tenacity of purpose; and the fact that he was a great rather than a small man should only lead us to look, and to look rightly,

[1] *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 402.

for that unity of will and character which, while traceable in the personality of all men, is only manifest fully in the strong.

He entered on that political life in which all his desires and hopes were centred, a young man of boundless ambitions. He knew that he had extraordinary powers, and that if he were given a fair field nothing could prevent him from being the first man in the country. But he laboured under disabilities. He was a political adventurer in the sense in which Canning and Disraeli, in differing degrees, were accounted political adventurers after him. By this it is not meant that he was a low-principled opportunist, but merely that he had not a stake in the country like most of his contemporaries, and that he trusted to rise by the unassisted force of his genius in an age when the *carrière ouverte aux talents* was by no means an established maxim of Parliamentary life.

It is true that he was carried into Parliament for Old Sarum, the classic example of rotten boroughs for all time. But, though that is a piquant circumstance in the life of our first great democratic statesman, it is not of great importance to an estimate of the position of Chatham. The borough was a family possession, but the other gifts which his family could make to him were few. He was not enrolled on the list of any of

those bands of placemen which moved in solid and ignoble phalanx in the train of the great magnates of the time. He had been brought into Parliament, but once there he was compelled to make his own way. Certain political associations, indeed, he had: the connection of his family with the Stanhopes, his alliance with the Grenvilles under the banner of Lord Cobham, his espousal of the Prince of Wales's cause and enrolment in the Prince's household, all helped him and rescued him from the obscurity of isolation. But as elements of influence these fell far short of the ideal of the ordinary eighteenth-century politician.

In spite of the rich abundance of memoirs and letters on which we can draw for a knowledge of that age, we can only dimly picture to ourselves a state of things in which men, not of genius, but without any mental or moral qualifications whatever, saw in Parliament a perfect *Eldorado* and a prospect of sinecures comparing favourably even with "the fat slumbers of the Church." These recompenses were not, indeed, for all; though there was, as Lord Melbourne once said of a still prized distinction, "no d——d nonsense of merit" about them. They were the admitted perquisites of the great families and certain widely ramifying connections of political influence, and of the swarm of hirelings and clever men of prostituted

talents whom these carried along with them upon the golden tide of opportunity. Chatham stood outside this circle, large as it was. Friends and foes alike recognised that he drew his strength from the popular support which his own ability and eloquence gave him, and most of the great Whigs regarded him with unconcealed suspicion as an intruder.

It was not merely that he did not possess political influence of the customary kind, but that it and its objects had no attractions for him. This was his second disability—that he was incorruptible. His refusal to pilfer public money had, no doubt, as has been already acknowledged, an element of ostentation in its publicity; but this ought not to disguise from us its importance. It would seem nowadays such a very tepid form of virtue merely to abstain from acquisitions like those which Chatham refused on becoming Paymaster of the Forces that there is some danger of our failing to remember that it was not always so. Chatham's integrity was not a mere appeal to the gallery. It was the outward and visible sign of that moral fire and warmth of soul within him which made his advent to power so supremely significant in English political history. Without doubt, his whole being recoiled from the sordid immorality, the torpor, the helplessness which the Walpolean era, despite its solid benefits to

the nation, left behind it as its legacy to Parliament. He brought an inspiration into politics, and in the darkest days since we have never wholly lost it.

However much Walpole might sneer and placemen smile, it must have been evident to impartial observers that it was this note of sincerity and passion which gave Chatham's eloquence its singular power, and that it was in virtue of this quality that he would leave his mark on history. We recognise it now; and indeed without this key his career would remain wholly unexplainable. But the critics of his early speeches had this much of truth upon their side, that in Chatham's first utterances ambition and moral indignation were both struggling to find expression, and that his desire to attain power was not less apparent than his desire to oust from it incompetent and apathetic politicians. He meant every word he said, but he knew quite as well as his hearers that the condition precedent to reform was that he should himself attain a sufficiently powerful position to be able to undertake it. In this sense, then, ambition was in early years his dominating motive. But so it has been with all great men who have a task before them—from Cæsar onwards.

The fact, however, that he was a young politician with a career to make was not lost

upon his adversaries, and when he took office in a Government dominated by the chosen heirs of Walpole, and defended measures which when in opposition he had attacked, they did not fail to make use of their telling opportunity. Pitt's cool defence of his changed attitude took their breath away, and seems still to be a stumbling-block to many. The truth is, probably, that he had previously fixed his eyes entirely on the attainment of office, and had not counted on the difficulties of his position when he should actually secure it. Having attained it, he found that office and power are far from being synonymous, that the failings of Government take on a more explicable aspect when viewed from within, that a period of political apprenticeship is necessary before a man can command the confidence of Parliament,—with which, as a Minister, he has, after all, to work, — and that the whole contemporary *régime* is not to be changed in a day.

More perplexing to those who watched him than either his integrity or his political inconsistencies was the artificiality and elaboration, which seemed to be not simply an eccentricity of manner, but to strike deep down to the very base of his character. Did it actually do so, or was it no more than a mask which the wearer could put on or off at will? In part this "theatrical stuffing and raised heels," as Burke contemptuously called

it, was the natural product of the time. The prevailing conception of the eighteenth century as the period *par excellence* of formality and mode is too widely attested to be seriously untrue. It is possible that, in our retrospect of it, our eyes have been fixed too exclusively on its manners and its literature, and we have been in danger of forgetting that it produced its complement, and more than its complement, of great men of action, "masculine from head to heel." But, after all, it is to the social and intellectual habits of an age that one must look to appreciate its ruling motives, and a judgment all but unanimous has pronounced the eighteenth-century world, charming as it was, to have been an artificial society. No man can free himself entirely from the influences that environ him, and Chatham was in many respects the child of his time. He speaks with all the eighteenth-century horror of "enthusiasm," as though unconscious of the measure in which he himself really possessed it; and his intellectual equipment was that of his age. And besides this he delighted in the courtly formality of the life around him, himself preserving, as we know from contemporary witness, all the manners of the *vieille cour*.

But this was by no means all. Though he had all the qualifications to shine in the formal world of society about him, it was felt that he preferred

to dazzle and astonish it by carrying formality almost to the length of a caricature. His elaboration of manner, passing now into an almost intolerable arrogance and hauteur, and now into a hardly less terrifying self-abasement, surprised everybody and sowed broadcast occasions of offence. This curious pose was partly the result of pride—the pride of a great man among mediocrities who did not understand him, and of a political adventurer who in the teeth of great obstacles had mounted to the highest place. There is a vein in his character that reminds us involuntarily of the sardonic genius of Swift; he felt something of the same contemptuous bitterness for weakness, triviality, and error; and among the great Englishmen of the eighteenth century Chatham and Swift are those who stood most conspicuously alone. Very likely, also, he made his mysterious aloofness into a system largely as a measure of self-defence. Child of his age as he was, he had cut himself off deliberately from some of the most characteristic developments of the society about him. He had none of the pleasant vices which absorbed so much of its time and its attention. In politics he took an unusual course, which drew still more definitely the line of demarcation separating him from his fellows. As time went on, his position became still more lonely. This deepened his reserve and

stiffened his manner into a kind of social coat of mail.

But neither the influence of the age nor the exigencies of his position are by themselves sufficient to account for an attitude that was not merely formal, but full of studied and dramatic effect. The primal cause lay deeper in the character of Chatham. He was a convinced believer in outward as well as inward greatness. He reproduces for us, with a strange verisimilitude in some features, Aristotle's immortal portrait of the man of lofty spirit. His view, whether he formulated it to himself like a philosopher or not, was that a great personality must have its appropriate setting. Hence he lived habitually in the grand manner. Though the age of Louis XIV. and the eighteenth century furnish some similar examples, there is none in which the adoption of the grand manner as a rule of life took quite the same shape as it did in the case of Chatham. He carried it into every public and private transaction in which he engaged, and, uniquely impressive as it often was, there were other occasions on which the combination of popular statesmanship with studied pomp produced results so incongruous that nothing but his unequalled histrionic faculty and knowledge of effect saved them from absurdity. We have heard already of his immense retinue and his

theatrical appearances in Parliament. In the private business of politics it was the same. "I never found him," said Shelburne, "when I have gone to him, which was always by appointment, with so much as a book before him, but always sitting alone in a drawing-room waiting the hour of appointment, and in the country with his hat and stick in his hand." The admission which he made to the same statesman in one of his illuminating asides, that independently of his health and circumstances he should, for reasons of policy, always have lived as he did, a few miles out of town, shows plainly that he deliberately counted upon producing an impression by surrounding himself with an atmosphere of mystery. He was, Shelburne said, "constantly upon the watch, and never unbent."[1] These last words, corroborated by everything we know of Chatham, are extremely significant. They explain not only the artificial exterior which was, in truth, a second nature to him, but much of the unaccommodating arrogance with which he treated his political colleagues. His natural imperiousness was accentuated by the continually high tension at which he lived. Self-centred, he wandered in a world of his own imagination, and did not trouble to gauge the characters of his fellow-statesmen, whom he too often regarded as mere

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 77, 78.

LORD CHATHAM

Wax Effigy in Westminster Abbey

lumber on the political stage. We see the results in his refusal to act with the Rockinghams, in the formation of his Ministry of 1766, and in his blindly impolitic conduct towards the Whigs within it.

In some such sense as this it is true to say, as has been said by Carlyle, that Chatham "lived the strangest mimetic life all along." But this mimetic element was the product of an intense self-consciousness rather than of a shallow insincerity. Chatham modelled his own life on the lives of "Plutarch's men"; and if this imitation, translated into the modes of thought and action of the eighteenth century, produced results that were often extravagant and regrettable, it must not be forgotten that it helped him to keep steadily before himself a high and generous ideal, and that England's debt to him for having done this is great. For we cannot separate the several parts of his temperament and say that without such and such a characteristic he would have effected more. A simpler and greater character may easily be imagined, but it would not have been Chatham. The spectacular point of view from which he regarded all human conduct, his own included, was an inseparable part of his peculiar genius. We may wish that the latter had taken another form, but we can hardly deny that it is traceable throughout all his career,

inspiring both his great actions and those which we regard as incongruous and misplaced.

His oratory confirms this impression. It passes, just as his actions did, not infrequently into florid and flamboyant expression, from which a purer taste would have preserved him. In these cases a superb gesture and delivery, pronounced comparable only to those of Garrick, enabled him to take liberties which would have made other orators seem absurd. "His tones," said Grattan, "were remarkably pleasing; I recollect his pronouncing one word, '*effete*,' in a soft charming accent." But much the most remarkable characteristic of his speaking was its union of dramatic power with a striking moral ascendency; and this was the salient characteristic in his life as well as in his oratory. Humour, close argument, and elaborate statement were not points in which his eloquence excelled. But in sheer enthralling power it has probably never been surpassed by any oratory in the language. "He lightened upon his subject," said Grattan again, "and reached the point by the flashings of his mind, which were felt but could not be followed." Charming all listeners by his brilliant conversational ease in ordinary moments, he held them spellbound when on a great occasion he rose to the very summit of imaginative art. Though of all eloquence his must lose most by being read

merely as the written word, and though what we have left of it is only fragmentary, we can still call up in some degree the effect produced by his great surviving apostrophes. His appeal to the House of Commons after the Peace of Paris to forget everything for the public; the speech on the Constitution in the House of Lords, in which he contrasted the silken barons of to-day with the iron barons of old; his great American speeches in both Houses; and the gorgeous rhetoric of his reply to Lord Suffolk when the latter had defended the employment of Indians in the war, must, when enhanced by the moral weight and magical delivery of the speaker, have been among the greatest moments of declamation which Parliament has ever known. Effective above all were the phrases and sentences of inspired epigram, eminently modern in character, in reading which it seems as though the spirit of Gladstone had been breathed into the barbed and polished periods of Disraeli.

There is, however, a certain air of unreality in viewing Chatham's oratory from a purely literary point of view. For he never used it except as an instrument, and he was a man of action above all. It was a supreme boon that gave him to England at the most epoch-making moment in her history as a great Power since the Elizabethan wars. The history of Ministries records no change so sudden

and so startling as that produced by his accession to leadership at the beginning of the Seven Years' War. Centralising the administration in his own hands, and working its almost disused machinery with extraordinary vigour, drawing from his chief naval and military subordinates a fuller measure of devotion than has ever been yielded to any other Minister, kindling to white heat the ardour of every soldier and sailor in the services and the enthusiasm of the people, he produced results which were felt all over the world and changed the face of history. What the fate of the country would have been if Chatham had not been there to take the helm, one does not care to think. It is true that, as his son said in the shortest and greatest of his speeches, England is not to be saved by any single man. Without him she would have survived the struggle, but she might have done no more than barely survive it. To Chatham belongs of right the old Roman boast that he carried forward the confines of the Empire, and, in the light of the events which followed the Seven Years' War, he appears hardly less as one who strove to consolidate it than as its extender.

He lived to see his work of Imperial consolidation at least partially undone by one of the greatest revolutions of all time. His last years were spent in a splendid effort to avert the

dismemberment of the Empire, and the separation of the two great English-speaking communities of the globe. It was unavailing, but yet we cannot say that Chatham's endeavours were altogether thrown away. Without his American speeches, we should have been deprived of some pages of political wisdom to which it will never be unprofitable to recur. If in his War Ministry he showed the way to win an empire, in this last oratorical campaign he showed how to keep one that was won. The whole duty of Imperial patriotism is set forth in these speeches, which, with Burke's, are a kind of charter of the constitutional rights and privileges of the members of our colonial empire.

Chatham's influence on the internal development of England, though less tangible, was none the less real. Although he left no great measure on the Statute Book, his career forms a landmark in English political history. There had been statesmen before him who maintained the privileges of Parliament against the encroachment of the Crown; it was Chatham's part to maintain the constitutional rights of the people against an autocratic Parliament. From the first he was the chosen representative of the still scarcely articulate democracy. They made his rise to power possible, and in return he never forgot the quarter from which he drew his strength. His conscious-

ness that he had the people at his back no doubt contributed something to the contemptuous disdain with which he watched the movements of the warring elements in Parliamentary life, and may even explain to some extent his reluctance, so disastrous in the history of the Rockingham Ministry, to bind himself by any party tie. His greatest period as a popular statesman was unquestionably that when he threw off his long illness in 1769 and returned to politics with a clearer vision and a kindlier heart, prepared to sacrifice at the eleventh hour his dearest beliefs about the inefficacy of party if only by so doing he could give effect to the nation's will. But, so far as his relations with the mass of the people were concerned, his career was a salutary one throughout. They were far enough off to see only his great qualities undimmed by their imperfections. Whether the endeavours of his last years may be held to outweigh his political blindness in 1765–66 is an open question. Englishmen would gladly remodel the latter period, but Chatham, with his imperfections and his strength, his lack of self-knowledge and his magnetism of the people, must be taken as a whole.

His hold upon the people was due to his unfaltering patriotism and love of liberty. The former was not that tepid emotion which often masquerades under the name, but a passion which

filled his entire being. His imagination set no bounds to the grandeur of England, and under his guidance her capacities were drawn out to the full. His love of liberty was the generous complement of that lofty ambition, and enabled him not only to do great things in his generation, but to leave a permanently inspiring example. In his enthusiastic devotion to the interests of the Colonies and the whole Empire, and in his strenuous championship of freedom and progress at home, he anticipates the fundamental principles which are the basis of the wider Britain of to-day.

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